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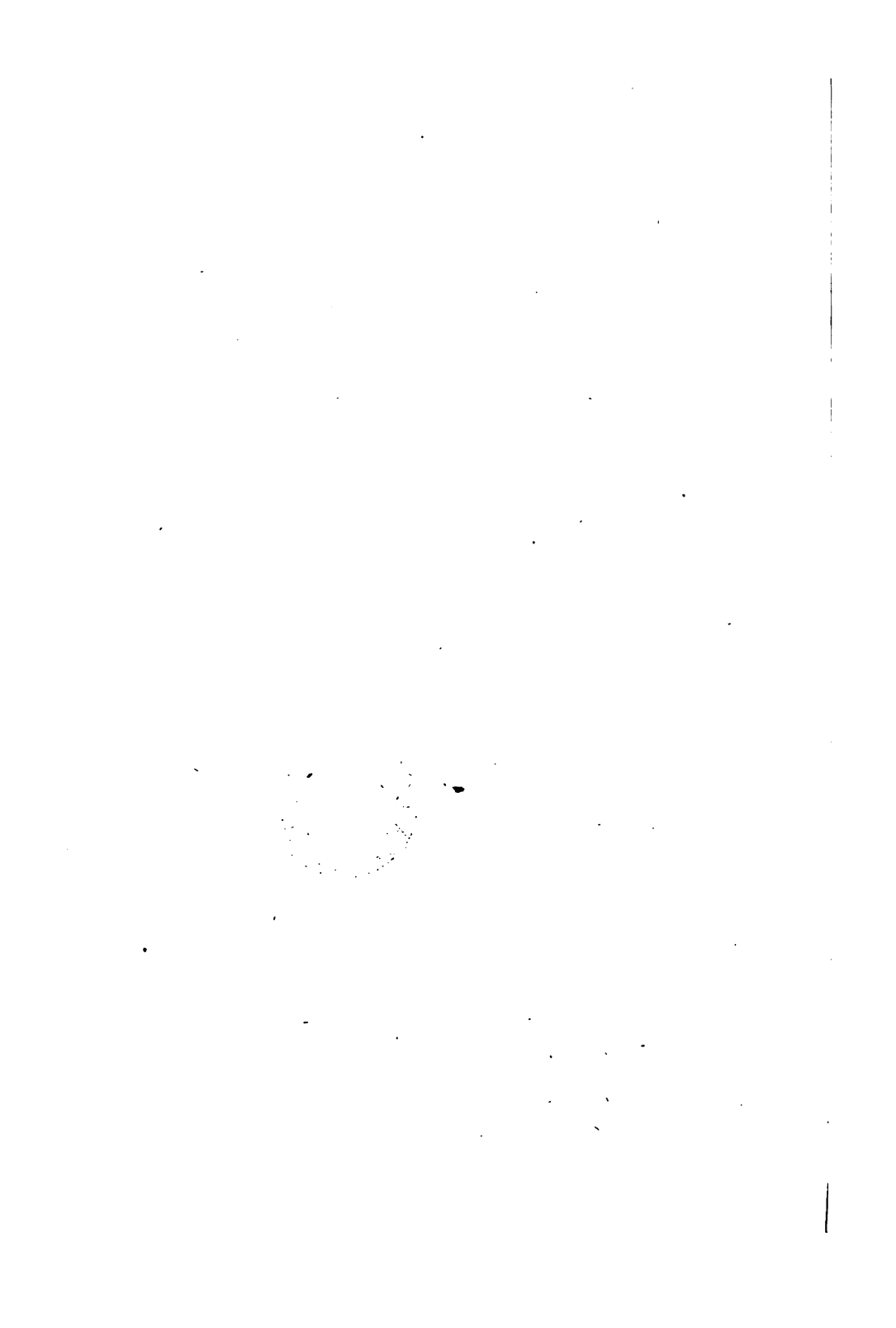
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GREGORY HAWKSHAW,

HIS CHARACTER AND OPINIONS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "COLONIAL ADVENTURES AND EXPERIENCES
BY A UNIVERSITY MAN."

"Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, Sir;
Only—"

"I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damned first."



LONDON:
BELL AND DALDY, YORK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

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THIS LITTLE BOOK I DEDICATE

TO MY MOTHER,

KNOWING THAT OF ALL MY CRITICS

SHE WILL JUDGE ME BEST.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE	Page ix
CHAPTER I.—Born to be a bishop—Remarks on matrimony and on cynics	1
CHAPTER II.—An old-fashioned household—And a funeral	13
CHAPTER III.—An opening in life—College Dons —“Elee”mosynary stipendiaries	24
CHAPTER IV.—Man or Boy? Pupa or Butterfly?—“A serious thing to be alive”—Pondering in bed, and on paper—Mother and Son—“Always take a pill”—“Telling fibs”—Judging by appearances—Dr. Slowman writes a letter, and Mrs. Hawkshaw makes a journey—Gregory makes a joke—A break in the story	45
CHAPTER V.—Domestic criticism—I am pronounced an infidel—I maintain my ground—A hint for the management of babies—The happiest day of Gregory’s life—Virtuous resolutions, and their result—Over the way—Gregory’s philosophy	72

CHAPTER VI.—The contemplative man's recreation —Every man has something which he will not lend—A discourse on tubs and lanterns— Gregory comes to grief—"Will you walk into the green-room and see the ladies?"—Brethren in misfortune—Why do people read novels?— An exhortation to be charitable	83
CHAPTER VII.—Some pleasantry about a watch, which I hope most people will not understand —A recipe for a head-ache—On prodigals— Good nature cynically defined—The Good Samaritan—A dreadful outbreak, for which the author apologizes here—An essay on College Chapels—Gregory begins to think	94
CHAPTER VIII.—On the classification of fools— Shabby expedients	114
CHAPTER IX.—Gregory spins yarns—His specula- tions on dreams—He finds his way to Doubting Castle	122
CHAPTER X.—A story with a moral—Special provi- dences—Another story, for which the reader may find a moral—A third, which produces some very disagreeable reflections	135
CHAPTER XI.—Tobacco <i>versus</i> blankets—Nature <i>ver-</i> <i>sus</i> art—My hero steals a duck, and is trans- ported (to England)—A " <i>Vache de Mer</i> "	149
CHAPTER XII.—Gregory's luggage—British travel- lers—Gregory at home again—Meeting ghosts	157
CHAPTER XIII.—Maidford and the "Three Graces" —An "un-jesuitical young lady"—"Not in my house, Miss Bessy"—A peculiar family—"Going to be caught up"—'Armony in 'Eaven—In- gratitude—Cold blooded animals	163

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAPTER XIV.—A dispute about an 'at and an 'at-box—The queen's proctor intervenes—Gregory's sisters go into society	178
CHAPTER XV.—What would the world be without religion to squabble about?—Maidford society—Unappreciated genius—Three pretty devotees—Talking people over—Gregory is impregnable—Colonel Whitethorpe—The two fishermen—My wife again interrupts	187
CHAPTER XVI.—A cynical essay on children	206
CHAPTER XVII.—A party for rational amusement—A children's party, with a conversation afterwards	214
CHAPTER XIX.—Vulgarity and refinement—A discourse on Zityrus and Amaryllis—Martha becomes a devotee—Poor Mrs. Hawkshaw—What was the matter with Bessy—New and original remarks on "Natural Selection"—Bessy's good works	230
CHAPTER XX.—An enthusiast—Mr. Silverquick makes a convert	244
CHAPTER XXI.—A refuge for the destitute—Moral suasion—A new rendering of "maxima debetur"—A plea for schoolmasters—Gregory becomes an author	249
CHAPTER XXII.—Schoolboys philosophically considered	259
CHAPTER XXIII.—The force of circumstances—Bob Tarpent's orange, and what came of it—"Beautiful for ever"—More snarling on the part of the author—Gregory and his novel	268

CHAPTER XXIV.—A very cynical chapter on human nature, in which the author clearly appears as a misanthrope—Bessy and her love—Dr. Ovid and ladies' b—ck p—r—Augustus and his love	276
CHAPTER XXV.—The author agrees with Mr. Silverquick, that expediency should rarely be sacrificed to principle—The Perpetual Curate calls on Mrs. Hawkshaw, and gets scratched for his pains—"I see it all"—Flirtation and a hat trick—Unworthy	283
CHAPTER XXVI.—"Ah, blessed umbrella!"—Hearts and st—m—chs—The colonel's story—Not so much harm done after all	301
CHAPTER XXVII.—A run on the continent—A Platonic affection—The answer to the letter at last	310
CHAPTER XXVIII.—A cynical essay on women—Why should I not believe?—Mrs. Hawkshaw has her worst suspicions confirmed—Mr. Fullbody has the gout—Too good for this world .	319
CHAPTER XXX.—Gregory Hawkshaw on prejudice—Bobby Sanderson and the Big Pike—The colonel is consulted, and gives his advice—The moralist by the stream, and on top of the 'bus—Mrs. Hawkshaw receives a startling communication	336
CHAPTER XXXI.—Gregory becomes a brother-in-law and an orphan—Nec coram populo—An essay on the punishment of death	360
CHAPTER XXXII.—Gregory becomes a son-in-law, and lives happy ever after	373

PREFACE.

"It won't wash," said Gregory Junior to me, in answer to a certain proposal. Now Gregory Junior, although he prided himself on writing the very best of English, yet in his moments of relaxation was apt to be rather slangy in his speech; and this little characteristic he shares with a good many of the rising young men of the present day. He was one of those smart young followers of the Press, who are always ready to pronounce judgment on any work which may come into their hands in the way of business, from a treatise on comparative ethnology to the lightest of love stories. Nevertheless, Gregory Junior was a rising young man, with considerable natural shrewdness and a keen eye to the main chance, in this latter respect differing very much from his father, now deceased. I had asked him, he being the eldest representative of the family, if he saw any objection to my reproducing certain traits and incidents in the character and life of his father, in a little book on which I purposed to engage myself. He replied that he could have no such objection, but he added at the same time the

expression quoted above, I having, in few words, laid before him the scheme of my work. "It won't wash,"—an expressive vulgarism, by which he meant gently to prepare my mind for failure.

"I declare," said I, "I don't see why."

"The public, my boy," (I was at least twenty years his senior), "the public!"

"Well," said I pettishly, "what of the public?"

Then Gregory Junior delivered himself as follows—

"The public, Sir, is a very difficult animal to please. The taste of the public must be consulted in all things. An author cannot (that is, if he expects to be successful) follow any line which suits him, but—but he must seek diligently for that especial line which is followed by—"

"That is to say, that an author is, and must be, the slave to public taste and opinion."

"No, no, my boy, not the slave, the paid servant."

"That position, as an author myself, I deny emphatically; but I don't see why he should be a slave or a servant at all. Surely, if a book have merit, the positions should become reversed."

"Sir, I'll grant that your book be the most meritorious of the week, and last week the list of publications gave twenty-three. Let it be full of originality, humour, wit, and invention." ("You know," said he with a familiar wink, "I'm only putting the case.")

"Let your book be all this, and what use? when the public prefer the humour drawn from the Newgate Calendar, and the wit from the police courts?"

"Well, well, it's your trade to disparage. I'll try, at

all events, and you may be quite sure that I shall carefully avoid all matters that might be identified as private or personal."

Gregory Junior again became oracular—

"Beg pardon for interrupting, but don't do anything of the kind. You may take my word for it, that if you draw a man exactly as he was, the world would never recognize him. My father was a hater of lies and sham—the world only knew him as a cynic. He was kind-hearted—in the eyes of the world a fool, and improvident. A thinker—men said he was an atheist. No, no, don't talk about personalities."

So the matter was settled.

Reader, I disdain to sail under false colours. This book is not a novel, properly so called, but rather a study of character—a channel for the conveyance of speculation rather than of fact, and as such I commend it to your notice.

GREGORY HAWKSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

GREGORY HAWKSHAW sat at his table writing a letter, and the state of the table was to a certain extent typical of the man. He had no order in his composition—I mean his physical composition. In fact he was such a man that what others call order was impossible and incomprehensible to him—impossible, because if he had been able to put his affairs in order, they would have been in disorder again in an hour or two, and incomprehensible because he had no idea of connecting any single possession with a constant and stated place.

But he had that wonderful faculty, which many disorderly men possess, of remembering accurately where to place his hand on the identical thing he required,—I remember that he used to argue with me that order was after all a poor substitute for memory. He used to say, that just as he

could place his hand on anything he wanted in his room, so he could produce and render available, at a moment's notice, any portion of his considerable store of knowledge and experience. So it was that on this particular occasion, the table at which he wrote was so littered and lumbered with things miscellaneous, that there was scarcely room on it to place his writing materials. He was hampered by a conglomeration of pipes, books, articles of toilet, gloves, papers, and other matters too numerous to mention. I firmly believe that the man used to carry about in his own mind a map of his room—nothing short of this could ever have enabled him to go straight to the coal-scuttle for his slippers, or to his tobacco-jar for his pen-wiper.

And he had mental characteristics similar to these, which in the early part of his life got him into some trouble, but which afterwards developed into a readiness and aptness of application which I have seldom known surpassed. If he could never tabulate his ideas, he could at least produce the appropriate ones at the right time, so that the want of method would by no means be apparent. I take these peculiarities first because I am persuaded they were in him purely natural and instinctive. Order and method were to him as distasteful as to some others they are pleas-

ing; and I am quite persuaded that order and method have little to do with character, or at least that they are but superficial indications, as are all those things which cannot be imparted or influenced by education. Now I am convinced that no precept or example would ever have made Gregory Hawkshaw a tidy man, for his parents—

But all this will come in its proper place, meanwhile we will return to the letter, which will speak sufficiently for itself.

“Chère Mademoiselle,

I find that I have set before me a task which I am not strong enough to perform. I had fancied that it would have been possible for me to correspond with you on the terms of a pleasant acquaintanceship.

Will you bear with me while I explain to you why this is impossible? and I am sure you have too much good sense to feel anything but sorrow for me, if I have opened my heart before you in vain. I am a man who wants a motive. Will you, or rather can you supply that motive?

I see two careers open before me, I may win for myself a good position and possibly fame; or, I may continue to live as I have lived hitherto, a life of vagabondage. You are unwittingly my fate, and as such I am content to accept you.

I know that you have only been civil and kind to me as you would have been forced to be to any one in my position; but believe me, I could not bear to go on treasuring up to myself a disappointment on my return to England. All I have a right to ask from you is that you will say frankly "it cannot be"—if you must say so, and I think that I have philosophy enough to enable me to bear my lot; but I shall be a vagabond to the end of my days. As this is the first time that I have thought of love, so I swear it shall be the last.

I shall know, then, when I get your answer, that I am not such an one as women learn to love, and I must struggle on as best I may alone. I feel that I have nothing to offer you except a share in a fight through the world; or perhaps I ought to say that I want a squaw to keep the wigwam while I am on the war path, and sew the fringe of scalps on to my leggings.

You see that in my bitterness I hardly know what I write: when I get your reply, I shall be at least responsible for what I do and say. That reply I can only now wait with deep anxiety.

Believe me, Yours very sincerely,

GREGORY HAWKSHAW."

To Mademoiselle Lucille Comatine.

Surely one of the strangest love-letters that was ever written to a girl, and the man was in earnest when he wrote it, and fancied that a disappointment would make him miserable for life—but he lived to get over it and marry somebody else.

When Gregory was born, the monthly nurse declared, with tears in her eyes, that he was destined hereafter to be a bishop. "Why?" said his mother, raising herself in feeble admiration and a fringed nightcap. "Why, Mum! Do 'ee just look how he holds his blessed hands."

And the mother, good soul, was just in that weak state when a little bit of superstition lays strong hold on the mind. Besides which there was no reason why her baby should *not* be a bishop.

"Lor bless 'ee, mum," said the nurse, "babbies is like a packet of assorted seeds, (her husband had a taste for gardening); one never knows what they may'nt come to."

To this bit of philosophy indeed what answer could be given, even supposing that any had been sought; and, to a philosopher, a new-born baby might be the subject of endless speculation. Those chubby legs,—are they destined to ascend the pulpit stairs or to be shot away in battle? That tiny clenched fist, (for it is a singular thing that as long as a man has instinct only to guide him he keeps his hands shut tight); that fist, I

say, shall it hereafter thump the pulpit cushion, or inflict a black eye upon the owner's wife? That nose, scant of proportion as yet, shall it ever be blown in high places? Then for the mother (only that mothers are not, thank God, usually philosophers), what a little world of future love, affection, help, support, or of black ingratitude and misery does that cradle enclose?

The senior Mr. Hawkshaw of all—with whom we shall have little to do in this history—had, of course, to be consulted before the time came for christening our hero; and the great question of what baby was to be called was discussed many times in all its bearings.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, deeply impressed with the nurse's prophecy, wished to give her boy a name which should smack of the episcopal. Now her husband stood out stoutly (unlike Mr. Canton) for his own Christian name. Now he had himself been christened George Theodore. Mrs. Hawkshaw, on the other hand, had, or pretended that she had, a great aversion to the name George. Her reasons were eminently feminine ones. "I'm certain," said she, "that if we call him George he'll be a spendthrift."

"Why so, Madam?" said the doctor, who, being an old friend, had been admitted into the consultation.

"What absurd questions you men ask!" said the mother as she caressed the unconscious subject of dispute. "I can't tell why I feel so, but I'm *sure* of it."

"It is worthy of remark," said the father, "that when a woman makes a statement like that, she means to have her own way. The female mind is inaccessible by argument: that is what makes women so obstinate. If a woman is once of opinion that two and three make six, no demonstration would shake her conviction."—"But then," added he hastily, "this tendency to jump to conclusions, and decide without thought, gives to the dear creatures a graceful impulsiveness and a pretty enthusiasm, which would throw a charm around heresy itself."

"Very well put," said the doctor, "at least the last part."

"And the name, George, the name?"

"Well, dear, with a sigh I suppose I must give up the first; but surely there is nothing against Theodore."

"My dear husband!" Now Mr. Hawkshaw knew very well what this meant; for incidental and peculiar to every household, there are certain expressions which bear with them the weight of decision or command, and in this case the "dear husband" knew that he was beaten on all points;

so he only said with a shrug, "Well, well!"

"Of course," said his wife, "you shrug your shoulders at everything that I say, and sneer at me for being a woman"—"My dear, I—" "and of course you don't like me to speak, but I do think that I ought to have a voice in the matter—my own son too!"

"But he's mine too, my dear, remember that."

"No sir, he's not yours, and you don't care I believe (sob) whether he is christened or not, or whether (sob) he lives or dies—and (using the baby, to a certain extent, like a pocket-handkerchief) he may well cry, the darling, for his father hates him, he does."—Now the fact was the baby had a stomach-ache, but Mrs. Hawkshaw was of opinion that all allies were useful when pursuing a beaten enemy; and in this way was Mr. Hawkshaw harassed in his retreat, until the doctor, taking him gently by the arm, led him from the room, remarking that too much excitement had often been the cause of danger to a person in his wife's position.

"Excitement! danger! little you know about such matters, they like it, doctor; and you'll see that this will do her more good than all your tonic. Poor soul, I wish she was down; I feel very lonely here without her."

From which speech it may be gathered, that

although Mrs. Hawkshaw managed to have her own way in most matters, yet that this couple were by no means unhappy together.

It has been remarked that "when two people ride on one horse one must ride behind." Now this little allegory is specially applicable to matrimony; and it may be remarked in passing, that the sex which is ironically called the weaker, usually occupies the foremost place.

"Do'ee know how to make a spaniel lov'ee?" asked one boy of another. "No." "Why, wop 'un," was the reply; and there are plenty of men who love their wives, and some wives who love their husbands with a spaniel's affection. It is a wise provision of providence for reconciling conflicting tastes and interests.

So in due course the child was christened Gregory.

Many years afterwards, this same Gregory Hawkshaw was sitting by his own fireside—his children playing around him, and his wife, round, portly, motherly, sitting opposite.

There came a knock at the street door—a single knock—not a rap—but one of those dogged determined *knocks*, which at the same time suggests timidity. (For your timid man, when he has once made up his mind, strikes boldly and hard). There came, I say, a knock at the

door, and the maid-servant presently announced a beggar.

"Humph," said Gregory, "wants to see what he can steal, no doubt." Then rising, "Let me see the rascal, I'll soon send him packing." So he walked briskly out of the room, and in defiance of political economy, gave the man a shilling.

"It's a horrible night," said he to his spouse in apology, "and even if the scoundrel spends the money in drink it'll warm him for an hour or two."

Always the same careless kind-hearted Gregory that I have known so long. Men called him a cynic, and this epithet, as it is ordinarily used, is, I think, the highest praise that the world can give a man; for the cynic is not, as we used to learn in Carpenter's spelling, "a morose snarling fellow." Ah! no, he is rather a lover of truth; for he who loves truth, will in the ratio that he loves it, hate sham, and lies, and fraud, and all the ten thousand atoms of hypocrisy and worse, which help to make up what is called society.

"The world," said Gregory, "according to the doctrine which we all have in our lips every Sunday, is an old Harridon, to be despised and renounced along with the flesh and the devil. But all the time we worship her in our hearts as the honourable Mrs. Grundy, who gives parties and sets the fashions."

It is just because the cynic is so fond of truth that he is universally condemned, for truth and society are at eternal war.

I think it is poor Douglas Jerrold who remarks what a complete *bouleversement* would be caused in society by one day's truth-telling; but nobody now-a-days reads Douglas Jerrold. He, too, was a cynic, and so was Thackeray. Solomon, too, was one of the greatest of cynics. Truth-tellers all of these.

I must say that in this matter I do not altogether agree with Gregory, and I am inclined to think that his railing against men and things arose partly from certain extravagances of his in early life, which will be told in their proper place; at the same time, mind you, though he took some time to find his level, he did finish by being very much in earnest about such work as came in his way; only I fancy that in doing that work he was rather apt to indulge and pet an unfair grudge which he had against society.

But, good gracious! where, oh my pen, art thou conducting me?—I find that in these few pages I have actually had my hero born, christened, and married. He has written a love-letter which is waiting for an answer.

I have alluded to so many events in his career, that, upon my life, I hardly know which to ex-

plain first. I have also introduced no less than three generations of Hawkshaws. I only hope I have not perplexed my readers as utterly as I have myself.

It only remains for me to ask that this chapter may be considered as going for nothing, excepting only such passages as relate to the birth of my hero, and his christening.

I have only one statement to make before concluding, and the fact may possibly have been anticipated: it is this, "Gregory never became a bishop."

CHAPTER II.

My hero's father came from the dear old North Country, and tried his fortune first in Durham. First of all he held a situation in a counting-house: this was before he married, and about this part of his life all that need be said is that he established a high character for probity, regularity, and punctuality. Indeed so proverbial had this latter characteristic of his become, that if he happened not to be in his place at the exact moment, the accuracy of the clock was called into question directly. Poor fellow, he had hard stern times of it in beginning life. He used to say afterwards that he had brought up and supported two families, referring to the fact, that for a good many years his father and mother, brothers and sisters, were constantly coming to him for help; but he did his duty on all sides in spite of abuse and misapprehension. All these details are absolutely necessary for the proper conduct of my work, or I would not give them.

I think that there can be no greater study of humanity than this, to find a man working on cheerfully, under the least possible advantages, and applying all his energies to a kind of work that is eminently distasteful to him. The time came when there was an end of this, and George Theodore Hawkshaw was enabled to embark in the career that suited him best. It matters little what that career was. Gradually the bonds that had hitherto tied him dropped away, and he found himself in a position to marry. Of his love affairs little need be said, except that through all that dismal time of thankless work, he had had before him, cheering him on, the image of a faithful girl who was waiting for him. So they were married quietly in an old grey church, and it is a remarkable fact that from that day the husband never once dined out of his own house. This couple settled down to a life of tranquil work and rest. They had not a great income, but time was mending that, and before their second child was born they were tolerably well off.

The man also made to himself a great personal reputation for shrewdness and probity, so that in the town in which he lived, and far into the country round, his advice and opinion were eagerly sought on matters both public and private. And yet he made no friends in the ordinary sense of

the word. Known and admired everywhere, he preferred staying by his own fireside; his tastes were eminently domestic, while his social qualifications were of the highest. It may have been from natural shyness, or perhaps it was that he felt sore and weary from his early struggle with the world, but at all events, he shunned social intercourse with his fellow-men. In his public capacity, he could not help gaining their esteem and approbation. Privately he would have nothing to do with them. His position was something like that of some hermit, who in times of old helped the weary traveller, but refused to share with his guest the meal that he freely gave.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, the lady whom I introduced to your notice in bed, was, with one or two exceptions, the most truly religious woman that I ever knew. I feel that I am verging on dangerous ground here. It is so difficult to describe in words that heart religion, that earnest all-trusting faith, of which we all must have known examples. It is difficult, I say, to describe such a state as this, without being affected on the one hand or profane on the other. The choice of words is exceedingly limited, and there is hardly one adjective that could be applied to such a character which might not carry with it a sneer. Religious, pious, devout, faithful, is it not so that these words

to the mass of people carry very little meaning? and they are often used in a light or sneering way, which makes me hesitate before using one of them here. There, I give it up; picture to yourselves a god-fearing woman, jealous of every religious doctrine belonging to real protestantism, praying always, and believing firmly, as why should she not, that her prayers were certainly heard, and would as certainly be answered.

Surely, some readers may exclaim, such a woman as you have attempted to describe, should be utterly exempt from those little weaknesses of temper and disposition at which it is the delight of the cynical worldling to sneer.

I beg then to state that this woman, so far from being perfect, was afflicted with several faults; she was exceedingly obstinate, that is to say, she felt persuaded that her own course of action was the right one, whatever other folks might say. She was prejudiced and bigoted in certain matters; that is to say, in matters of opinion and religious belief she considered that she could not err. On such points she was quite inaccessible to argument, and although she would have utterly laughed to scorn such a modern innovation as the infallibility dogma, yet she did really believe herself to be in all matters of belief infallible. All persons who did not hold in their

entirety all the articles of her own belief, she thought of with horror, and perhaps sometimes with pity, as destined to eternal burnings. I remember that on being told of the death of a well-known Unitarian minister, her only comment was "What a dreadful thing to think of!"

Outside of her religious belief, she was kind, loving, and charitable, though somewhat apt to lose her temper, and say sharp things for which she was always very sorry afterwards.

I have now brought my story up to this point, that my hero was born of such parents as these, and christened Gregory.....Pass we now some few years of quiet home and nursery life, during which time Simon and John, and Mary and Martha, all with scriptural names, you will observe, were brought into the world.

Gregory is now a good-natured careless boy, full of fun, and tall for his age. He has considerable reputation for ability at home, though at school he never cuts any great figure, and lets all the prizes be carried off by others. The only subject in which he shines is Scripture History. In this he is acknowledged *facile princeps*, and often puzzles the curate who visits the school once a fortnight for purposes of instruction.

Gregory goes to a day school, as does also his brother Simon, for mother has a horror of allow-

ing her children to be out of her sight and influence. She dreaded for them all contact with the world; and her husband, as you may guess from what I have told of his character, was quite ready to back her up in this. I believe that to these ideas of his parents Gregory owed, firstly, most of the calamities which afterwards befell him, and secondly, that awkwardness and shyness of mixing with his fellow-men, which caused him so many hours of pain, and never left him.

It is doubtless morally better for a boy that he should be kept at a distance from every possible taint of the world's garment, but unfortunately, what is good for our moral natures is very often bad for our physical welfare. The fact is, until he was launched neck and crop into a real whirlpool of temptation and worse, Gregory was treated by his parents as one for whom it would be enough that he should be what is called "good."

He knew and kept before him constantly, that he ought to resist steadfastly the world, the flesh, and the devil; that he ought to fight manfully against the powers of the wicked world; but unfortunately he did not know, when the time came, how to distinguish his enemies.

Could this lovely creature, crowned with flowers, with lily hands and intoxicating breath, be one of

the enemies of whom he had been told? No, no! an enemy could not smile like that. Where were the mother's precepts now? Can this fine companion—so witty, so well-informed, so handsome—be really that devil against whom his mother had warned him. Oh, no! (for he had been taught, this young man, to believe in a real personal devil). Oh, no, the devil is a hideous foul creature with horns, who is ever seeking those whom he may devour.

But I am running too fast ahead, as I am too apt to do. There is something more yet to be said about Gregory's education and early years.

With the exception of the occasional visit of a relation, or of one of those few traditional people who were admitted on the footing of relations, Gregory's home received no guests. It was not that the Hawkshaws were deficient in hospitality. They would have been quite willing to be what is called hospitable, only on the condition that they received no hospitality in return. Gregory's father was fixed in his determination to spend his few hours of relaxation by his own fireside, and in the simple delights of home. Wedded to a person eminently unworldly, he found no difficulty thrown in the way of his enjoyment. So gradually the world had fallen away from the Hawkshaws, and ceased to "pester them with

invitations." At the same time they accomplished the difficult feat of secluding themselves without giving offence, and the reputation of George Theodore Hawkshaw remained as high as ever. The best people in the county and city would still call at his office, to ask his opinion or advice, often merely framing pretexts for chatting with him, for he was a most agreeable talker. He could seldom pass through a main street without being seized by the button-hole and detained. Often and often he would pass by unfrequented byways, to his pleasant home outside the city, sneaking through slums like a felon, in order to avoid these talkers; at the same time, were advice and assistance really needed, he gave them freely. This family was, however, by no means gloomy or dull. There are pleasures in a life like this, which society cannot give or appreciate. Long country walks or drives; once a year an excursion to the sea-side; pleasant evenings by the fire-side, or in the lingering light of summer in the garden. These used to form some of Gregory's most pleasant memories, when he thought of long ago. But—mark this, oh my readers who are parents!—*these children had no companions of their own age*. They were happy enough without them, and their parents saw that they were happy, and were satisfied.

I lay stress upon this point, because I see therein an enormous evil. Let children be taught at home, by all means, with loving words from loving lips, to be good and true, to reverence their Creator and shun evil ways,—but this is not enough. The world, or society, would never teach them this; but there are matters which the best of parents cannot teach. It is cant and falsehood which suggests that the teaching of the world is bad and useless, and to talk about the “one thing needful,”—for there are many things needful. The man who has never been taught by early social intercourse how to walk and talk in a drawing-room, without feeling or looking like a fool, let him be ever so stout a soldier of Christ, (I speak with reverence), is fighting under heavy disadvantages. In these artificial times he is best able to defy the world who is able to hold a good and respectable place in it. The world is apt enough to sneer at goodness, when arrayed in its best; against virtue with a hole in its coat there is a double sneer—one for the goodness and another for the rent.

The man who lives well and respectably in this life does not necessarily make this life all in all to him. It is good to be honest, and true, and pure, but it is doubly hard for the man to keep himself so who lacks politeness, who does not

know how to carry his limbs properly, to eat his meals as other people eat them, to talk to young ladies without feeling like a fish out of water, or without gasping and changing colour like a dying dolphin. I suppose that when Gregory was twenty years of age he had not spoken to six young ladies in his life, certainly he had never spoken six consecutive words to one. Now many men under such circumstances would have become irclaimably vicious. It was not so with Gregory; but, like a good many other men who have known nothing about women, he became, and remained for many years a woman-hater,—I hate that long Greek word,—until circumstances happened which I shall relate in due course.

I am delighted to think that I have almost emerged from the maze of detail and description in which I have hitherto been painfully wandering. I need only here mention that Gregory's two brothers both sickened and died (who shall say that it was not better so?) before they arrived at an advanced stage of boyhood. So Gregory was left alone with his two sisters.

* * * * *

Coming home from school one morning, when he was seventeen years old, Gregory was met at the threshold of his home by the tidings of his father's death.

Suddenly, in the prime and vigour of his intellect and strength, the good man had been taken away.

Waste of time would it be to try to describe all the agony of bereavement that fell on that household. All of us, alas! are too well acquainted with the house of mourning. We know it,—the closed shutters—the gloomy, darkened chambers—the ghastly men and things that invade the hushed obscurity. Let us rather bury our dead out of our sight. The heart, too, knoweth its own bitterness better than any pen can tell; let us keep our pens, brethren, for scenes of happiness. We may, perhaps, give a glimpse of it to some poor wretch who is but little acquainted with such a theme; but who is not acquainted with sorrow?

So on a clear, breezy, sunny February day they buried the just man under the green mound, beneath which two of his children slept. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.—Solemn words, my brethren, which, strangely enough, we never appreciate except when we stand at the pit's mouth. And the afternoon sun shone down cheerfully on the fresh-piled sods, by the corner of the old grey church in which George Theodore Hawkshaw had been married. Meanwhile, the undertaker's men—a noisy crew, for grief out of livery is grief no longer—drank pots of beer, and sang, at the village inn.

CHAPTER III.

THE widow, thanks to the care and forethought of him that was gone, was not left without a certain share of this world's goods: that is to say, she had enough to enable her to live as became a gentlewoman, with the hope of being able to provide for her children. Gregory, too, was almost a man, and would soon be able to provide for himself. For all this, when the first bitterness of grief was over, her heart found room to be thankful. It was very hard to say for what profession Gregory was fit, but meanwhile it was settled that he should remain another year at the grammar school, where he was obtaining a very fair proficiency in the classics. His mother always kept in mind that early aspiration of hers about a bishopric, and therefore, when the lad, by the recommendation of the head master of his school, was offered the chance of going to the university on very advantageous terms, she felt that the way was being smoothed and prepared wonderfully, as she was fully persuaded, in answer to her prayers.

There happened to be a vacancy for a "censor" at "St. Pancras" College,—the examination was merely nominal, and the advantages were great, the stipend being no less than ninety pounds per annum, with certain other privileges. Gregory's mother was told that with care, (and who doubted that her boy would be careful?) that with proper care there need be very little, if any, extra expense. Several clergymen, whom she consulted on the subject, were of the same opinion. It was quite possible, they said, for a young man to pass creditably through the university without spending a halfpenny more than a hundred a year.

And in this they were perhaps right; but they forgot to mention that such a career requires very rare and exceptional qualities. It requires that a boy should all at once begin to practise the calculating self-restraint of a man; that he who has always hitherto been content that others should think for him, should be able to think and act for himself and others without any preparation for the change. It requires also that the youth should have a certain share of ambition and a strong desire for learning; that he should think of pleasure only as a relaxation in the intervals of work; that he should be able to see without longing, or at least without repining, others going a pleasuring while he is glued to

his books. And above all is it requisite that he should be able to make a proper choice of companions, or, better, that he should be content to live without companionship.

This leads us into our first glimpse of Gregory's character; but it is only a glimpse that we shall get at present, the final result we must be content to arrive at step by step as we follow his history.

At this time, then, Gregory was utterly thoughtless. He was troubled very much afterwards with that pestilent habit of thinking, but at present the capacity for thought lay dormant.

He had, as I have before said, no order in his composition; and this was the more to be wondered at because his father and mother were the two most orderly people that I ever knew.

He was very good-tempered, and this good temper of his afterwards developed into good nature, when he began to *think*; at present it took the form of amiable selfishness. In fine he had what our solid slang calls "a good disposition,"—by which is meant an infinite capacity for the enjoyment of life.

Joined to a highly nervous temperament this "good disposition" of his made him morbidly acute in all matters that had to do with the feelings of others. Nearly all the foolish things that he did in early life were done under this

kind of pressure. For such a nature it was quite impossible to utter a No! which might give pain or produce ridicule.

In manner he was shy and hesitating, awkward in dress and gait. He was, so to speak, pervaded by an indefinable species of carelessness which affected him morally and physically.

Add to this considerable intellectual ability and a splendid memory, and we may leave the description and pass on.

Such was the youth who was deemed fit to enter on such a collegiate life as I have tried to describe. His mother's ideas of college were of the vaguest. She had an idea, poor simple soul, that a university was a seminary entirely devoted to grave and laborious study. Moreover, she was, like all mothers, totally unable to appreciate her own child's character, for character is only brought to display itself by contact with the world, it wears a mask at home.

All mothers are too apt to exaggerate trifling faults in their children, and to pass over graver failings which do not show themselves in acts of disobedience or disrespect. It is love that prompts the feeling in the mother that her child cannot really be bad.

It is to be surmised that mothers always form a better estimate of other people's children than

they do of their own, in the matter of character; and it is natural that this should be so, because they look on their own children with eyes blinded by a film of love.

In my opinion Mrs. Hawkshaw acted perfectly well and naturally in sending her son to the university, at all events she acted as she thought and believed for the best; and I am not sure that it was not really for the best for Gregory, for, owing to the faults of his education, he was absolutely in want of some sharp and stern experience of the hard ways of the world, in order that he might at last be brought to his bearings; and although certainly his going to the university was almost the cause of his utter ruin and downfall, (so nearly, that he afterwards used to shudder when he thought of it), yet it was through and by means of his university career that he acquired that amount of worldly wisdom and experience which was wanting to enable him to live respectably.

It now becomes necessary to say something about the college to which Gregory was sent, and the position which he was expected to hold in it.

Not that I am going to trouble my readers with any long account of college life and doings. Such things have been chronicled sufficiently often; and, moreover, I find that without a considerable spice of exaggeration and "glorification" such

accounts are not likely to please the popular taste. Wasted time and talents, youth and energy mispent, are to my mind very dismal things to write about; and, for my part, I cannot understand the process by which certain writers have been able to extract amusement out of them. I am told, however, that the rarest colours and best perfumes are extracted out of coal tar and stable manure.

St. Pancras' College had once been among the first in the university. Time had been, when to be called a St. Pancras man, was synonymous with being distinguished in the examination room, on the river, or in the cricket field. Let us by no means despise these two last elements of university success; for there are very few kinds of distinction which do not act beneficially on a young man's character. It is always good to excel in something. But in the old time of which I speak, St. Pancras had the name of being a "good college." That is to say, a college which would not permit any of its members to disgrace it by failing to excel in something; and this was not all, for it demanded a comparatively high standard of scholarship and attainments from its members, and this standard was maintained by a kind of *esprit de corps*, which was very impatient of disgrace. Men who came from the university with the St. Pancras "Hall Mark," were pretty

certain to be men of ability at least, if not of application.

The college, however, as Gregory found it, was in a very different position. It had suffered for many years under the harsh government of a narrow-minded bigot. One of those stern unsympathetic characters of the old school, who fight strenuously against all progressive reform, but are willing enough to clip, and pare, and reshape, so that the result is retrogression. In political life, I suppose, such a man would be called a liberal conservative. One of those who, while sticking like limpets to old traditions, are always grumbling and growling at the present state of things. It is to be noted that your liberal conservative is never without a grievance. When Dr. Slowman accepted the reins of honour, he set about the work of "improvement," as he called it, at once. He objected to boating and cricket; and, although he could not well interfere openly with these amusements, yet he managed to carry on the war covertly. He instituted extra 'chapels,' and vexatious lectures, and attendances in Hall. To be known to be a boating man, was the certain road to the doctor's displeasure. Now, Dr. Slowman forgot, in all this, that the days were gone by when the youth of England would stand bullying. And so it came

to pass, that the 'promising' freshmen, most of whom manage to have a voice in the selection of their college, went elsewhere. At this Dr. Slowman hugged himself vastly, for although the numbers were thinning, "the college" could afford to wait for recruits of the proper stamp. Gradually, as the college lost its old reputation, these recruits came. The St. Pancras boat no longer fought for the first place, but crawled miserably up with the last, among the scarcely concealed sneers of the university. The St. Pancras cricket matches were now merely fancy affairs, got up for the sake of a smart drag and a luxurious dinner. And in Gregory's first year there was not a single name from St. Pancras in the class list.

Work, either physical or mental, was voted a bore at St. Pancras, except that compound of both kinds which is devoted to the toilet. St. Pancras' swells now sauntered, in gorgeous array, arm in arm by the side of that river where their predecessors had won so many triumphs.

The college did, however, obtain notoriety for one or two things. A St. Pancras man carried off the silver challenge cue for billiards, and it was known that every evening some party was to be found in the college, at which high gambling of some kind was going on.

Dr. Slowman was now getting old, and inclined

to rest on his laurels. He had reformed the college, and if adverse rumours ever reached his august ears he declined to be troubled by them.

There's a divinity doth hedge a Don that blots him from the roll of common men. His is not even a limited monarchy. The maxim that the king can do no wrong, may be read in two senses:—it either means that the king is absolute like Nebuchadnezzar, or that somebody else is responsible for his actions. (In these days the proper reading should be, "The king can do nothing at all.")

But the head of a college lives in a state which is all his own. He has his advisers, who, however, are not responsible, but subordinate; that is to say, they are only responsible when their advice has been bad. He has about him that awful dignity of office, that ineffable and indescribable tinge of authority, which descends also, somehow, upon policemen, common-law judges, beadles, and railway guards. But there is more than this. He holds in his hand, so to speak, the lives and characters of his subjects. Undergraduates tremble before him. Parents believe. In this I think lies the secret of his tremendous power, that his decrees are submitted to, and approved by, the parents of the accused. Cæsar's wife was above suspicion, and the head of a college can do no

wrong. I don't mean to insinuate that this power is ever used wrongfully, I only wish to define the power itself.

He is one who keeps his state apart, doling out regal but dreadful hospitality. His invitations are stern as death. His banquets almost as doleful.

Do we not all remember how the respectable butler used to stand outside the chapel door, with that ominous list, "Dine with the master to-night, sir?"—Check, the name is marked off, and so on till the list of the doomed was completed.

Need we follow the victims further, the awful preparations, the last convulsive attempt at merriment at the door, whereon was written plainly, "All ye who enter here leave mirth behind;" that painful ceremony of taking wine with a host, whose mildest tone of voice was suggestive of rustication; the mistakes and blunders of the freshmen, pardoned with the gracious air of a judge who does not agree with the verdict of "acquittal;" after the two long hours of dinner, (but there used to be capital Madeira, mind you), that fidgety half-hour of standing, cap in one hand and coffee-cup in the other. "I say," whispers some knowing freshmen of the bolder sort, "where does the old boy keep his women?" This mystery, however, is inscrutable. Last of all,

who does not yet remember with what a thrill of pleasure was welcomed the tumultuous retreat to pipes, cigars, and beer?

The office to which Gregory was appointed at St. Pancras must now be briefly described.

According to the statutes of the university at large, every undergraduate was obliged to attend Divine service in his college chapel twice a day. Like many other provisions in the statute book, this had become obsolete, but each college had substituted some regulation of its own.

At St. Pancras every man was expected to attend at least one chapel a day, either morning or evening; at the same time, in order to satisfy the requirements of the statute book, and (but of course this was a secondary consideration) to add to the college resources, a fine was instituted for each of the statutory chapels which was missed. This fine may be looked at in two ways:—either the college allowed its members to evade their duty by making a certain payment, or it inflicted an unjust punishment. There is no escape from the conclusion, which is an obvious one.

Moreover, on arriving at the college, all undergraduates were given to understand that only one chapel a day would be required from them, and most of them were not aware that they would have to pay a fine for not keeping the

other. I suppose that the college thought it but logical that an offence committed unwittingly should be punished without the knowledge of the offender. The fines thus incurred were always added to a mysterious item of the college bill, called college dues. The morning service being a little longer than the evening one, sixpence was charged for the former and threepence for the latter. But after all it would be unfair to expect that any portion of the great community should be free from extortions in some form or other. Servants have their "vails" or "perquisites," hotel-keepers their "sundries" and "attendance" in the bill; and universities and colleges have their "dues." All these are recognized forms of robbery, sanctified by long usage, and submission on the part of the robbed. Oh, Alma Mater, Alma Mater, these are but the least of thy failings. I often wonder whence that tender epithet is derived as applicable to thee. Rather in thy case is the old tale of the Pelican reversed; for it is the children who bleed while the mother mutters gently from her gory beak, "Never mind, dear, it is not a painful operation, and it will do you good to lose a little blood."

The fine about which I do not care to write much, but which seems to me to be that which can be least justified, was that of ten shillings

for failing to receive the Holy Communion. As an undergraduate once said to me, rather wittily, but broadly, "At St. Pancras we avoid damnation at the rate of ten shillings a month."

On entering the college chapel, one remarked on either side of the aisle an undergraduate seated, wearing a gown known as a scholar's gown. These two were the 'censors,' whose duty it was to take note of those who attended the chapel, in order that the weekly list of fines might be made out. It was also the duty of the 'censors' to find and mark the lessons in the great Bible out of which each undergraduate read in his turn; and should the undergraduate of the day absent himself, one of the censors was expected to read in his place. The Latin grace in Hall was also repeated by the censors.

In all other respects the censors were simple undergraduates, *in statu pupillari*, as the phrase goes in dog-Latin, and attended lectures just as the other men did.—But we must not keep Gregory waiting at the college gates any longer.

I don't know how it happened that his mother did not accompany him to ——. Here I am in a difficulty. This being a work of fiction, I am of course writing about an ideal university, and I have to find a name for it. Thackeray solved the difficulty with Camford and Oxbridge, which names

he has rendered immortal and beyond my reach; and upon reflection I do not see why I should give any name to my university, so let it be nameless.

I don't know, I say, how it happened that Gregory's mother suffered him to make his entry into this nameless university alone, and unaccompanied of womankind; in not going with him she certainly deviated from her usual custom.

However that may be, I know for a fact that Gregory arrived in the town by himself, and was transported, he and his luggage, to the Lamb and Star, the best and most expensive hotel in the town. Somehow or other there existed a kind of natural affinity between Gregory Hawkshaw on the one hand, and expensive places and things on the other.

Gregory's experience of money was very limited. He had hitherto been accustomed to a shilling a week pocket-money, with an occasional extra sixpence. He now found himself his own master with ten pounds in his pocket, and he had no more idea of the value represented by these ten pounds than he would have had of the value of a precious stone picked up at the diamond diggings.

I think that Gregory during his life spent uselessly more money than I ever knew a man to spend in that way. His temperament led him into

expense as naturally as the nose of a camel leads the animal to water.

If he went by hazard to an hotel, it was sure to be the dearest, if not the best, in the town. In ordering his dinner that first night in a university town, he picked out by accident the most expensive dish (in a modest way) which he could have ordered. If he made a purchase at a shop, he was sure to find afterwards that some one else had bought a similar thing for a third of the money.

At eleven o'clock in the morning after his arrival he went to call on the master of St. Pancras.

Now Dr. Slowman being such a man as I have described him, had the further characteristic of being what is vulgarly called a "bully." With the great body of undergraduates, he was conscious that although he might be dictatorial, there were bounds which he could hardly dare to pass; even in a case of real iniquity he could scold as much as he pleased, only, in his scolding he was always obliged to be, as far as in him lay, gentlemanly. But with the two unfortunates called censors, the case was altered; they were, so he said, in a dependant or inferior position; they were (to quote a favourite expression of his) Eleemosynary Stipendiaries, and he took care to remind them of the fact very often.

Therefore, when Gregory called and was admitted into the 'Sanctum,' the doctor received him with a very distant and severe expression indeed; and when Gregory, in the fulness of his youthful heart was going to shake hands with his future guide, philosopher, and friend, he was surprised to find that he was only allowed to touch, as it were, the tip of one of the doctor's fingers.

Gregory recoiled in confusion, and upset a chair. He rushed to pick it up.

"Never mind," said the doctor, "the man will pick it up when you are gone."

Then Gregory stood fiddling with his fingers.

Presently the doctor said, "Take a seat, Mr.," himself seated all the while in an easy chair.

"And when did you arrive?" said the doctor in his calm magnificence.

"I ought to have arrived," said Gregory, pulling out his watch as all nervous people do under such circumstances, "at 4.30, but the train was"—

"I didn't mean that," cried the doctor snappishly, "when did you get here to the town, to-day? or yesterday?"

"I got here yesterday aft—"

"And where did you sleep, may I ask?"

Now Gregory was thoroughly frightened already, and he felt as if it would be a sort of sacrilege to mention the sign of a public-house or hotel

in such a presence, so he began to stammer.

"I slept at a kind of, in fact it was a—"

"Will you tell me at once, sir, where you passed the night?"

Now it was a singular thing that at that very instant, the name of the hotel utterly passed from Gregory's memory, and the more he tried to think the further it seemed to get from him. The doctor waited with a severe frown on his wrinkled face. It was one of those faces that seem to have been made for frowning, the skin of the forehead was as loose as that of a roasted apple, and when the doctor wished to look angry, it all drew together into a regular Clapham Junction of wrinkles, (you will excuse the oddness of the metaphor, but I cannot think of a better one), just at the top of his nose.

Presently Gregory felt that the silence must be broken; he knew that he had got into disgrace, but could not tell how.

"Well, sir," said he, "I've forgotten the name, but it was an hotel, a very respectable"—

"Sir, I'm afraid you are prevaricating with me, but let that pass. I think, nay I am sure, I met you or—ahem—I was told that you were seen smoking a cigar last night in the public street. Now I ask you, was that so?"

Gregory regarded the doctor all astonishment.

"It must have been a mistake sir, I never smoke."

"Well, I hope for your sake, young man, that it is so. Smoking is a habit that is injurious at once to the health, the morals, and the purse; it is forbidden by scriptural authority,* and is in fact a most disgusting and pernicious practice. So you tell me that you don't smoke, never smoked?"

Thus urged, Gregory was on the point of making the revelation that he once tried to smoke a clay pipe and it made him sick, but stopped himself in some confusion, which the doctor, of course, mistook for conscious guilt.

"Well, young man," this was one of the doctor's severest terms. "I shall speak to the dean and the other college authorities, but I greatly fear that you won't do for *us*, (*us* being the college). You are evidently inclined to be extravagant, (extravagant, as the doctor intoned it, bore the force of profligate). You are careless, even in your manner of entering a room," (here the doctor gave a ghastly sort of chuckle confirmatory).

"I beg," said Gregory, looking at the chair on the ground, but the "pardon" was drowned in the rest of the doctor's oration. "Your personal appearance is not what I could wish, nor are your manners such as I approve. *Good morning.*

* Prove that, Dr. S., and put my pipe out.

Thomas, the door; but first pick up this chair."

Now Gregory was conscious that this man had insulted him several times in this interview, but he did not know how to resent the insult; nor did he know how far a college don was privileged to be ill-mannered. At the same time he felt very miserable and dejected, as he passed towards the door leading into the quadrangle, but he was speedily reassured by receiving a message, brought by the man who had picked up the chair. "The master's compliments, sir, and I am to show you to the dean's rooms." Now the dean was the *legatus*, or second in command at St. Pancras.

He found the dean, a tall portly individual with a comic cast of countenance, busy distributing examination papers to three or four young men. He greeted Gregory at once.

"Ah, Mr. Hawkshaw, you've seen the master? and how did you like him? Did he suit your tastes? A little old, and prejudiced, don't you think, eh?" This was said in a tone of pleasant banter characteristic of the man, as Gregory found out afterwards. But he also found out that the dean's "chaff," as it was called, was very often as dangerous as the master's scolding.

The dean of St. Pancras was a man who loved his joke, in season or out of season, and the worst of it was no one could tell when he was in

earnest. He was just as likely as not to begin a sentence with an atrocious pun and end it with a severe reprimand.

"Sit down, my dear Hawkshaw, sit down a few minutes, while I give these gentlemen something to amuse them."

So Gregory sat down, having as yet hardly spoken a word.

Presently the dean being at leisure returned to Gregory, and asked him a few questions as to his attainments, affecting surprise and admiration at each answer.

"And you've really read the *Alcistis*? and *Horace*? and six books of *Euclid*? My dear Hawkshaw, I congratulate you, you're a paragon, and your fortune's made. Have the kindness to take these papers, and place them before you, and try to answer them. Take your time, I beg, and don't over-exert yourself."

Gregory's examination proved satisfactory, and he was duly matriculated as a censor of *St. Pancras*, the other men whom he had seen in the dean's rooms, not having been, as he had supposed, competitors, but merely freshmen being examined for matriculation.

Into all the awe-inspiring ceremonies connected with matriculation we need not enter here. So in the next chapter we will assume all this past,

Gregory having been committed to the care of a tutor, and installed in a set of apartments, which, though the worst in the college, were considered good enough for an Eleemosynary Stipendiary.

CHAPTER IV.

"A COLLEGE tutor, my dear madam, is a tutor in the university sense of the term. It is not his duty, as you may suppose, to give instruction to your son. Your son's name is merely placed on his list, and the tutor asks your son to breakfast once a term, that is all. Stay—if your son gets into any kind of trouble, it devolves on the tutor, in the first instance, to reprove or punish him; but I do not wish in this place to drift into a treatise on college government."

* * * * *

When Gregory came home to spend his first vacation with his mother and sisters, he had undergone a great change. He had left home a boy, and he returned a man, *i.e.* "a university man." It is astonishing how the collegiate youth of England cling to that term, "man." A young fellow, who, six months ago, was a boy at a boarding-school, to whose simple taste treacle pudding was a delicacy, now recounts to you a history of a splendid little dinner, which he and two other "men" have enjoyed at the "Mitre" or

the "Bull." It is pleasant to assert one's dignity before all the world, and to assume that one has undergone some such metamorphosis as the caterpillar or the caddis worm. Nay, it is delightful to feel one's superiority over the insect, in respect that there is not in one's own case any intermediate stage. But is it really so, or can we not conceive it possible that the chrysalis may fancy itself to be a butterfly?—the boy, *in statu pellaris* (in a pupa or chrysalis state) fancy that he is a man?

Of course, no one is taken in by the pupa or chrysalis; every one knows that it will probably be, in its proper time, a perfect insect, unless it be stepped on, or accidentally boiled with cabbage, or meet with some other mortal disaster. In the same way, few people are really taken in by the pupa "man," although he may fancy that he is not recognized as a pupa.. Men of the world study him and classify him, just as the naturalist does with the insect, and speculate as to what kind of a creature he will be when he arrives at his perfect state.

Meanwhile the chrysalis all the time is fancying that he is a butterfly, and is happy in so fancying.

So when I say that Gregory left his home a boy and returned to it a man, I mean that he had entered on that intermediate stage of fancying himself a man.

He brought back with him, much to the astonishment of his mother, a large assortment of fine clothes. (How well he must have managed his money, thought she.)

He also brought with him, and used freely, a considerable store of university slang, which is to schoolboy slang as poetry to prose—as wine to beer—as a full-blown rose to a rose-bud; in fact as the university man to the schoolboy.

I think if I were asked the question, when does a man really begin to deserve the name? I should say, "When he ceases to be slangy;" for distorted words are most certainly a sign of distorted ideas, the word being the picture of the idea. As long as a person talks slang, you may be sure that that person has not arrived at the conviction, as Carlyle has it, it is "a serious thing to be alive."

Some of us find out the truth of this Carlyle's expression earlier and some later; those who do not find it, are assuredly not worth their salt, and there are some people who never find this truth, and any one who thinks must wonder at the number of such people.

"I do declare," Gregory used to say to me afterwards, "that most of the men and women I know might just as well be cattle, or sheep, or pigs, for any use they make of their human privileges. They eat a great deal, and sleep a

great deal, and make a great noise with their tongues, and what else? Do they ever, in their little lives, give a thought to any one of the mysteries before, and behind, and around them? Bah! why should they, they are happier as they are. A sheep who comprehended that he had not always been a sheep would be a very uncomfortable animal, and would probably make bad mutton. It is better not think at all, and the further we get the more we shall enrich the ground from which we came. Absolute happiness can spring from one source alone, viz.: incapacity for thought. To think, is to pile up misery for one's self—;" and so on, and so on, from which it will be seen that although in this his first vacation, Gregory was supremely thoughtless, and therefore supremely happy, yet he did not live all his life without thinking.

At the same time the word happy must be used here with a reservation. For the first day or two everything went smoothly. Gregory had much to tell, and his mother and sisters much to admire and be astonished at. About those amiable girls, just mentioned, I have little to say; they will probably not figure in our story, although I might find plenty of room for them. But I hold, that to encumber this history with young ladies, whom I should be constantly obliged to desert in favour

of their brother, would be highly impolite. Let it be sufficient to state that they were both very nice young ladies, and all that sisters should be.

After the first few days, I say, Gregory began to find his home rather dull. In the first week of his coming home, his mother had been induced to pass over, not however without remonstrance, a habit of smoking which Gregory had acquired, but then everyone smoked at the university. But Gregory found that staying at home all day, even though he could smoke as much as he liked, or walking with his sisters, was exceedingly dull work, and moreover he longed at this time for the company of other young men, and he was fond of playing billiards. Now his mother did not approve of young men, that is of men under thirty who were not clergymen, and even these she liked better if they were married, and above all she hated billiards (as to the nature of which game she was quite ignorant,) with a holy hatred, holding it to be an invention of the devil for the ruining of mankind, old and young. It was hard to say how she had become possessed by these ideas, but I fancy I remember that she used to fortify her opinion by the history of a male relation of hers, who had devoted considerable time and money to the pastime in question. And I am so far inclined to agree with her, that I state my

conviction, that the game of billiards, except as a recreation for the rich man, is a very dangerous snare. Beautiful and fascinating as the game is, it has been the cause of much grief to many a victim whom I have known, and to my friend Gregory among the number.

So this 'billiards' became an endless cause of contention between Gregory and his mother; *he* fancying that because he had left the maternal roof his eyes had been opened, so that he *knew* good from evil; *she* grieving, first, that her son should have acquired such a vicious taste, and secondly, that he was not ready at once to give it up.

Of course Gregory *ought* to have given it up, but he didn't, because it was too hard for him, having once sipped the cup of pleasure, to believe that there was any harm in taking a deeper draught.*

I find that these moralizings interfere sadly with my story, but what is a poor author to do.

Did you ever, friend reader, ponder in bed ere balmy sleep came to close your eyelids and turn thought inside out, or extinguish it altogether? Did you ever, I say, in such place and time, frame painfully for yourself the programme of to-morrow's doings? How you must certainly give a piece of

* I like an original metaphor.

your mind to a person who has treated you badly; you must certainly pay that tailor's bill, whatever come of it, and appease that bootmaker without payment. You must finish, without fail, that magazine article? or discharge that cook? To what end do I ask these irrelevant questions? Because, if you have ever pondered in such a manner, always in accordance with your own proper temperament and circumstances, I will stake my reputation as an author that the morrow of which you have been framing the programme, will produce for itself results entirely different from those over which you have been brooding, fondly or the reverse. On reviewing the day you will find that you are more friendly than ever with the person with whom you intended to quarrel; that the bootmaker has been paid, and the tailor sent empty away. Instead of finishing the magazine article, you have taken the little ones to pick primroses in the country, and returned to be again fed with indigestible food, prepared by the very cook who was to be discharged, but whose wages your wife has just promised to raise. Such is life; and so is it with me. I sit down to write a chapter; I declare upon my honour that I have all I want to say, every incident and remark, ready to be imparted to my readers; but, once my legs beneath the table, my pen in hand, I

lose my identity. All my fine plans are scattered; I am a slave at the mercy of—my pen. When I sit down to write I feel myself in the position of a man who gets into an omnibus to go to a certain place. "What! stopping again; this is too bad. Why on earth do old women travel in omnibuses? and, good gracious! we've only got as far as Kennington, and I must be in the city at ten." Meanwhile the heartless conductor, steeled by long usage to the contemplation of mental anguish, sets the lumbering machine going again for a brief space.

How is it, I wonder, that a long pointed instrument, dipped in a black fluid, and placed in a man's hand, becomes instantly imbued with life and thought? My pen will no more let me pass by an opportunity of making a wise, or foolish, or sarcastic, or illnatured remark, than my wife will let me smoke in her drawing-room, and nobody will venture to find fault with that illustration. "You're always sneering at women," said my wife, to whom, out of sheer vanity, I am accustomed to read aloud from time to time passages from my M.SS.

"Madam, there you mistake; you were good enough the other day to call me cynical. Now the arch cynic himself was no hater of womankind, but I think I have heard of another philosopher

who was petted with.”—“I dare say,” said my wife, “you consider all this very clever and amusing, but I shall go to bed.” And for once she kept her word—and went.

* * * * *

Gregory's first vacation at home—it happened to be the short one at Easter—was then occupied by a series of skirmishes between his mother and himself. There were many points about the young man's conduct which shocked much the maternal instincts. He no longer possessed a taste for what his mother used to call “the simple pleasures of home.” He rebelled successfully against the Wednesday evening service at the parish church; nay, on his first Sunday at home, he rose too late to go to church in the morning, and on the second, he stayed at home in the evening on pretence of a headache. He very seldom made his appearance at the domestic prayers, held at half-past eight in the morning. He often remained away from home for many hours, and resisted cross-examination on his return, and once did not return until half-past eleven at night. On this occasion I must say that he felt awfully ashamed of himself, and was ready to make all kinds of good resolutions and promises of amendment, only, unfortunately, his mother was cross and tired with sitting up for him, and, as I opine, had eaten

something in the course of the day which had disagreed with her. So a scene ensued which laid the foundation for much future misunderstanding between mother and son.

Here I must rest for a short period to enunciate the thesis that a man's words and actions, like his dreams, come from the stomach. People who have what is called a bad temper, usually have a faulty digestion; and little aberrations of temper, in people of good disposition, might almost always be traced to some temporary physical derangement. When Gregory became a philosopher, as he afterwards did, he used to impart his views on this subject to me. "Philosophy," said he, "is the art of taking things as they come. But to be able to do this, it is necessary that a man should understand his own constitution; that is, that he should know when he is in the wrong. If I ever find myself inclined to be angry or discontented, or annoyed by trifles, or inclined to make a fool of myself in any other way, do you know what I do? I always take a pill: 'compound rhubarb' is a very good material.

"The benefit is twofold. In the first place the moral effect is salutary; the act itself induces reflection. I say to myself, Now I am putting myself to the test. If at the end of twelve hours I am still in the same frame of mind as at

present, I shall conclude that I am in the right, and act accordingly; if, on the other hand, I find that my sentiments have undergone a change, then I shall be able to say, thanks to that little bit of rhubarb, I have avoided some foolish action. You may depend on it," continued Gregory, "that the *mens sana* cannot exist without the *corpus sanum*. Bad or ill-cooked food, taken into the body, generally makes its presence felt by uneasiness of mind. He is a glutton who bestows too much thought upon what he eats and drinks, but he is most certainly a fool who gives no thought to the matter at all. The men to be avoided, or at least watched carefully in this world, are they who do not care what they eat."

I have no fault to find with these opinions of Gregory's, and I respectfully commend the treatment he suggests to the consideration of my readers. I have only one other remark to make at this time. Do not the most amiable of us know some moments when our temper gets the better of us? and does not this occur most frequently when we are kept waiting for our meals? I don't refer to the actual sensation of hunger, but I fear that there is often more than that. Did no one ever experience what I mean? A feeling of intense uncharitableness, a black desire to wreak vengeance on somebody, utterly dispro-

portionate to the cause of offence; for, after all, what matters whether one's stomach remains empty for half an hour, more or less. *Ergo*—

When Gregory came in, at this unearthly hour, (for ten o'clock was the family bed-time), he found his mother sitting, stately and severe, behind the frugal and accustomed bread and cheese, which ought to have been partaken of and removed long ago. He was hungry, and moreover had not really been doing anything very wrong. He had met two or three acquaintances, with whom he had sauntered into the billiard-room, and in the delights of that place had forgotten to take count of time, and his evening's amusement had only cost him a shilling.

"I'm sorry I'm so late, mother," said Gregory.

"Yes, it is late," said his mother, and relapsed into reading a good book which she held on her knees, very likely the Bible, or "Thomas à Kempis."

Gregory began to eat, and poured himself out some beer.

"Heartless young man!" said his mother abstractedly.

"Now I'm in for it," thought Gregory.

You see young people cannot be brought to regard their elders and their feelings in their proper light: they regard only themselves.

Presently said Mrs. Hawkshaw, "What *will* be-

come of you, if you go on in this way?"

"In what way, mother?" said Gregory, with his mouth full.

"Gregory, I believe you're possessed by the devil!" (Surely Mrs. Hawkshaw must have eaten something very indigestible.)

"But what harm have I done, mother?"

"You ask me what you've done, when you come home at midnight, after spending your time most likely in some low pothouse. Careless, idle!"

"I haven't been in any pothouse, mother."

"And you spend all your time in smoking and reading idle trashy novels; and you never open one of your books for college."

Now Mrs. Hawkshaw, among other infirmities, had this one, viz.: of not being able to keep to the point in discussion. The probability is, that had not Gregory stayed out late playing billiards, he would never have heard anything about pipes and novels from his mother's lips.

"And it was only this very day that your sister Mary told me that she felt very uneasy about you; and now I see with my own eyes that you're a bad, wicked, extravagant young man. And you look at me with a sneering laugh." (The fact was that Gregory had begun to learn logic at the university, but he was not sneering.)

And here I may remark, that the statement

about sister Mary was a fib on the part of Mrs. Hawkshaw. "What! a religious woman, and tell lies?" My dear madam, I did not say anything about lies—the word I used was fib, it is wicked and depraved to tell lies; but the most religious people tell fibs when there is anything to be gained by them, and they are not likely to be found out. 'Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves.' And of what is the wisdom of the serpent composed, may I ask? Read to your household, my dear madam, that terrible chapter about Ananias and Sapphira, and then, when the books are put away, and the tea-pot brought in, give your directions to the servants:—"John, if Mr. Boreham calls, tell him I'm not at home, and get this note sent to Lady Dineout; and, George dear, if you happen to see any of that set, please say, that I am confined to my room with influenza." These little stratagems are right and lawful in society. It is not a lie to say that you have the influenza, or that really you have left your purse at home, or to manufacture any untruth which is necessary for the maintenance of your own interest. Let us thank heaven, that we live in Christian times, and possess a religion which is so exceedingly flexible as ours.

So let no one blame Mrs. Hawkshaw for telling a fib about her daughter Mary.

"And you look at me," continued she, "with a sneering laugh, and—and you want to break my heart."

"I don't want to break anything," said Gregory, leaving out the word mother, for he was getting angry himself, and it must be remembered that even the tongue of a mother is a sharp instrument.

"If I've done anything wrong, I'm very sorry for it; and I beg your pardon for keeping you up late—but, I don't see why you should be so angry."

If Gregory had been older and wiser, he would have known that there is one certain method of putting a woman in a passion, and that is to accuse her of being angry. And I am sorry to say, that at this point, Mrs. Hawkshaw became very passionate indeed, and said many things which she would never have dream't of saying in cold blood. And Gregory also said some things which he never forgot, and for which he never forgave himself; although his mother, to do her justice, had quite forgotten them the next morning, as also she had forgotten the hard things which she herself had said.

It is not necessary for me to describe such a scene. I am given to understand that in the best of society, as in the lowest, bitter words and harsh abuse frequently pass between relations.

Gregory went almost sullenly to bed, in which receptacle (why have we not some comprehensive word like the French *machine*?) I say that Gregory smoked a pipe in bed that night, and before he put out the candle, not forgetting his prayers, (how many of us say our prayers before going to bed, I wonder), found himself in a much better frame of mind.

What was it, I wonder, that prompted his mother to come and knock at his door, just as he was falling asleep? She could not sleep, poor soul, for thinking of her son's great wickedness, and for the longing that possessed her to make him better. But surely some mischief-making sprite, or fiend, if you will, must have urged her to repair straightway to her son's apartment; not, it is true, with the intention of finding fault, but rather of making him see the error of his ways.

Gregory was very sleepy, and the light of the candle dazzled his eyes; and, with the best intentions, he could not be gracious.

"It's very late, mother, hadn't you better put off talking till to-morrow?"

"Oh, Gregory, still in this wilful wicked humour. Will nothing I have to say influence you?"

"The only humour I'm in now, mother, is the humour to go to sleep. There's nothing wicked in that, I believe."

"Now understand, Gregory," cried the good woman, flying off in a tangent, "that if you're to remain in this house, I forbid your smoking. Your father would have never countenanced for an instant such a vile filthy habit." N.B.—She had lighted her son's pipe for him only the day before.

Gregory was not more than half-awake, and it seemed like a nightmare to him. He covered his head with the bedclothes. His mother sat down on the bed, and squeezed his feet; he drew them from under her and groaned.

Gregory had never read that pathetic bit of genius, "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures," for that work was as yet not even thought of by the author; but he needed nothing to aid his sense of misery. And I am shocked to relate that his only sensation was one of intense weariness. "Will she never go?" thought he. But for more than an hour his mother remained seated there, entreating, upbraiding, exhorting. She also was utterly and intensely miserable, but the young man seemed to steel himself against her. She felt herself the most wretched mother in the world, and yet all the misery (had she only known it) arose from a trifling misunderstanding. At last she went, but Gregory could not sleep—he heard her toiling down stairs, (she was not so young as she

had been), and the sound seemed to drive from him at once all idea of sleep. He turned and turned—sleep would not come. The rest is too sacred to be more than hinted at here. He rose, and, partly dressing, descended to his mother's room: he knocked. We cannot follow him into that holy chamber. Have we not all of us knelt by a mother's side, she praying, as only mothers can pray, or perhaps weeping? On some of us perhaps those tears have left a mark which we shall carry with us to the hereafter—who knows?

So the whispering sprite did not gain much by his motion.

There are times when the author, humorist, moralist, cynic, call him what you please, seems to speak lightly of solemn things. The cap and bells jingle, however grave the occasion which calls for the shake of the head. But an author is a person who must necessarily come before the public in disguise. He has no recognized profession. He cannot say, "I have such and such capabilities, please employ me," only when his work is finished, made after the pattern which suits his tools, can he offer it for judgment.

It is a mistake to judge either books or men by appearances or first impressions. The clown who tumbles on the stage, or makes pit and gallery roar by his grimaces, is in reality as dull

and solemn as an undertaker's man behind a corpse, and with better cause than he. The undertaker's man, on the other hand, is, as I am given to understand, a merry fellow in private circles.

Gregory was glad enough when this Easter vacation came to an end, and he returned, by no means loath, to his pleasant life at the university. You see I am trying to make a sketch of the doings and feelings of a young man, not naturally bad or selfish, thrown into very great temptation, and under circumstances altogether unfavourable to the growth of high qualities. His first term in the university had been too much for him. For the first week or two, he had felt rather lonely and miserable, but he had picked up acquaintances one by one, and his carelessness and fresh inexperience had gained for him more. His position in the college might have enabled him, had he taken advantage of it, to keep clear of expensive habits and idle friends. But he was as it were intoxicated by the unwonted freedom and absence of all apparent restraint which he found about him. He gave his orders freely and royally to all kinds of shopkeepers, and as he did not know how to frame habits for himself, he was fain to copy those of others. Although he was always careless in his personal appearance, he had

a natural taste in dress, and we all know what that means, when money is plenty or credit good; and Gregory found that his credit was good for any amount in the town. The tradesmen were good enough to declare, with respectful bows, that they did not want ready money, so the ingenuous youth kept his ready money in his pocket, and pledged his name instead. He got into a sad custom of strolling along the 'Low street' with one or other of his new companions, and entering the best shops just to look at things; anything that took his fancy was at the college gates within the hour, labelled Hawkshaw, Esq., St. Pancras. Some of the older men in the college shrugged their shoulders a little when they heard of his doings, some of them went so far as to damn his impudence for trying to ape his betters, but they generally concluded that it was no affair of theirs.

He became a noted billiard-player at the subscription room which the St. Pancras' men affected. He was also induced to let himself be coached for the "lower boats," which races occur, as everyone knows, in the Lent term.

All this did not interfere very greatly at first with his duties as censor; he missed one or two chapels, it is true, and was reprimanded by the dean, and was somewhat careless in making out his weekly lists of fines, but he did not transgress

very gravely against college rule and discipline. From all this it will be comprehensible that Gregory found his first or Easter vacation not nearly so amusing as the university.

Have patience with me a little longer, oh, my reader. I am painfully conscious that my hero, as he has hitherto appeared, is by no means such as a hero should be, that he is a very shadowy Gregory indeed; but I have laid before myself the task of depicting the gradual growth of his character as it was affected by the circumstances in which he was thrown. Bye and bye we shall pass to livelier scenes and pastures more luxuriant.

Mine is no versatile pen, it has not the power or inclination to run riot among people and things which do not affect the matter in hand. And moreover Gregory at the worst of times was only a sinner in a small way; that is to say, though he was careless and extravagant, perhaps worse than that for awhile, there was nothing aristocratic about his vagaries. He only followed at a humble distance the example of his betters and superiors in rank and fortune. Some other time I must take for my hero a duke or marquis, then I fancy that I should be able to revel in description. Everybody naturally takes an interest in the vices of nobility, but Gregory Hawkshaw, who very nearly ruined himself, his mother, and sisters, is a

very uninteresting character: the thing is so common you see. People in that rank of life have no right to be wicked, and must take the consequences.

In the middle of his second term, Gregory was one morning smoking in company with half a dozen guests whom he had been entertaining at breakfast, when his mother walked into the room.

On seeing an old lady dressed in deep mourning, and wearing that frightful disfigurement, that helmet of woe called a widow's cap,—on this unexpected interruption, Gregory's guests speedily took their departure, without any ceremonious leave taking, and left the mother and son together.

To explain Mrs. Hawkshaw's presence on this occasion, I must go back a little. It has already been recorded that Gregory had taken up the habit of smoking. Now smoking was one of Dr. Slowman's pet aversions, and the doctor soon got scent (so to speak) of Gregory's tobacco. Several passages of arms had taken place on this subject between Gregory and the doctor, but the lad had already picked up sufficient impudence to be aware that on this point he could defy his enemy, as he began to consider the head of his college.

The master had threatened and stormed, and had even hinted at rustication or expulsion, but Gregory knew that in the fastness of his own

room he could do as he pleased, and he was glad to spite Dr. Slowman for what he considered his former insolence to him.

Smoking, be it known, is sternly and pointedly forbidden in the statute book of the university, but this edict has by custom been considered to take effect only outside the college precincts. The master of St. Pancras had, however, gone so far as to prohibit, under penalty, any smoking except in the men's own chambers. There, of course, his power ceased.

A good story used to be told, in connection with the master's hatred of tobacco.

An impudent freshman (thanks to our public schools, there are such animals in the universities), was sent for before chapel one morning:—

"Do you smoke, Mr. Smithers?" said the master.

"No thank you, sir," replied the freshman cheerfully, "not before breakfast!" The sequel of the story is not related, wherefore its truth is to be doubted. However, all other means having failed, Dr. Slowman determined to use his most powerful weapon, and write to Mrs. Hawkshaw. The effect of the following letter upon the poor lady may be imagined. The master was an adept at writing such letters, and did not stop to think whether he were likely or not to inflict pain.

"St. Pancras College, May— 18—.

My Dear Madam,

It is with great pain that I feel it my duty to address a letter to you on the subject of your son's conduct and probable career at this college, and I am also grieved to have to acquaint you that unless that course be entirely changed, the career to which I have alluded will be a short one."

(The grammar here is rather confused, but it must be remembered that the study of modern languages was not at this time encouraged at the universities.)

"Your son's transgressions have been, and are, so manifold, that I hardly know how to begin. Happily a habit of truth-telling was always hitherto prevalent among the young men in this college, but in my first interview I detected your son in the act of repeated prevarication, if not of downright untruth. He told me on that occasion that he did not smoke, although I thought that I had evidence sufficient to justify me in taxing him with that offence. Since that interview, however, your son has repeatedly been observed with pipes and cigars in his mouth. Indeed he has now thrown aside dissimulation, and openly defies the

authorities of the college, and the statutes of the university.

We have also grave reason to suppose that he drinks, this being the usual concomitant of the dreadful habit of smoking.

He is careless in the performance of his functions, and we have serious reason to apprehend that in the approaching examination, called "Restorations," or, vulgarly, "Little go," he will bring disgrace upon the college by failure.

I need not here remind you, madam, of the conditions under which your son was admitted to the office (one of charitable foundation) which he holds. I think you will see the desirability of remonstrating with him on his present course, so that he will be able to take advantage of the opportunity which the college is still willing to give him. Apologizing for any pain I may have unwittingly inflicted,

I am, My dear Madam,

Yours very respectfully,

To Mrs. Hawkshaw.

R. E. SLOWMAN."

Now no one knew better than the writer of this letter that it was really a production without any serious meaning, and containing a string of empty menaces. But Mrs. Hawkshaw, of course, did not know this, and was in great tribulation about it.

She received this note late on one evening, and on the following morning started by the earliest train to see her son, and also the Master of St. Pancras, whom she regarded in her own mind as a kind of advanced schoolmaster.

I think Gregory managed very well in this interview somehow, for no very disagreeable scene ensued. He was able to give his mother a very good breakfast, with the remnants of his feast and some fresh coffee, and would not hear of talking any business until she had eaten well. I fancy that the sense of being host gave him dignity and confidence; and her feelings also softened considerably towards her son, as he bustled about to supply her wants.

After breakfast the "spy" came to clear away the things; and the two fell to work discussing the master's letter, just as if it was an every-day matter of business. Gregory easily persuaded his mother that the passage about lies and prevarication was a calumny. (They are so easy to persuade, those mothers, when they are in the right humour; and moreover this was a calumny, as we know.)

"But do, do, my dear boy, try and wean yourself from that smoking. I am sure it isn't good for you."

"Look here, mother," said Gregory, "Old

Slowman says that smoking leads to drinking. Now, on the other hand, if I were to wean myself from smoking I should be certain to take to the bottle."

This small joke settled the matter, but Mrs. Hawkshaw was firm on one point,—she would assuredly go and call on the "Master." "Suppose, my dear, he should hear I had been here; why, it would be an insult."

Gregory tried to explain and coax, but it was no use.

"On such a matter, Gregory, you must allow me to be the best judge."

So she went, threatening, much to Gregory's horror, to retail to the master the joke about the bottle.

Whether she did this or not, I cannot say,—there are some points on which I am necessarily ignorant. Probably, if she told the joke, she told it without the point, as women usually do. Her opinion of the master of St. Pancras was by no means high when she returned to her son.

"He *almost* insulted me, my dear."

Was this woman inconsistent? Women always are.

Here my wife interrupted me; but her interruption necessitates a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER V.

As I have before had occasion to remark—if from time to time I read aloud passages from my MSS. to my wife it is purely from vanity and the desire of admiration—my wife, on whom I invoke a blessing, on the other hand, fancies that I am appealing to her taste for an opinion on my work. In this she does but follow the natural bent of the female mind in general, towards criticism, Now as I was reading aloud the conclusion of the last chapter, I noticed sundry symptoms of impatience on the part of my spouse, and, to tell truth, it was on that account that I introduced that concluding remark about women, as a kind of assertion of superiority and defiance. When I saw that it was no use going on, I laid down the manuscript.

“My dear Maria,” said I, “if you are going to tell me that I had better scratch out anything you may as well not speak, for I am an admirer of Pontius Pilate. You know he said to his critics, ‘What I have written, I have written.’”

"George! I believe you are an infidel."

"Why, my dear?" said I, mildly.

"People," said she, "who quote Scripture in that ribald way usually are."—"And besides," said she, turning my weapons artfully against myself, "if Pilate had taken his wife's advice, you remember—"

"Ahem," said I, "I think the conversation is getting profane."

"But," continued my wife, "I wanted to tell you something that has really struck me. You know I like your writing, and consider it very clever, but I don't think you're quite careful enough."

"What on earth do you mean, Maria?" said I, aghast.

"Why, George dear, you describe your hero as living ever so long ago, and yet you talk of his mother as going to see him by the train. Is not this an impossibility?"

Here was an acute piece of criticism! I regarded my wife with admiration.

"I am glad to find," said I didactically, "I am glad to find, Maria, that you really listen to what I read to you. I had fancied that the baby—"

"I hear every word, sir," said this young mother, hugging the infant alluded to with an air of pleasant triumph.

"But allow me to tell you, ma'am, that that piece with which you are pleased to find fault, I consider to be the very best in the whole chapter, nay, in the whole book." Then I considered it my duty to edify my wife with a short lecture, wherein I proved that—"External circumstances of time and place have nothing to do with the growth and exposition of character."

In the course of my remarks, (with which I need not trouble the reader in detail), I delivered myself of the following sentiments.

"I have no doubt that a thousand of years ago asses had just as long ears, and brayed as loud, as in the present day; the lion was just as noble as now, and equally carnivorous. Women in the oldest times were silly and weak—witness Eve; men were treacherous, and full of evil passions—witness Cain; men were drunkards—witness Noah, whose first act after separating from the beasts in the ark seems to have been to make a beast of himself. You remind me that he offered sacrifices first—so much the worse. Men and women who told lies and did other iniquity before the flood, would have done things just as bad in any other epoch. Enoch would have walked with God if he had lived in Christian times, only instead of being translated, he would have been burnt, or otherwise tortured or persecuted. Virtue

and vice are of no age or country or religious persuasion.”—"Do you really believe," continued I, "that railways, or electric telegraphs, or chignons, or crinoline, or table turning, or clerical masquerades and mummeries—" Here the baby began to cry, and I lost the thread of my discourse. So I persist in my statement that Mrs. Hawkshaw travelled to the university by rail.

I find, (as the French say), that a baby, in the hands of a skilful mother, is a most formidable weapon or engine, both of attack and defence. I am convinced that my wife made that baby cry at that particular moment, to prevent my proceeding with my oration. I would not for a moment insinuate anything involving a charge of cruelty; but just consider how many necessary operations must be performed daily on an infant's person, of which crying is the natural result. I have again and again impressed upon my wife the desirability of performing these operations at stated periods—say at the half hour before meal times, and in the morning, when it is time to rise and begin the duties of the day. The baby would thus become a kind of animated clock or alarum, much annoyance would be saved, and the child would begin early to acquire habits of punctuality. My wife calls me a brute whenever I recur to these arguments; but surely things would be much

better so than under the present domestic system. I declare that I am fond of my baby, but my wife basely takes advantage of this weakness on my part. She causes it to cry at the most inconvenient times; she gives it to me to hold when she is very displeased with me, and then finds fault with my awkwardness. If I feebly protest against certain inevitable consequences, she calls me a wretch without natural affection. She talks to the baby about me in the most calumnious manner, and when I am forced to notice her words, she asserts that she did not speak to me. But this discourse about babies is even wider of the mark than is usual with me.

* * * * *

Gregory and his mother were quite reconciled, and passed a very pleasant day together, the young university man taking a delight in showing to his parent all the lions of the university—the gateways, and spires, and old historic walls—the gardens, now at their best, under the delicate green of early summer boughs. This was a pleasant day for Gregory to look back upon afterwards, when times were changed with him, for on that day he seemed to feel a new spring of affection towards his mother. She took such an evident interest and delight in all that he told her, and be sure that he talked enough. I hope that all of us have some memory of the kind to cheer us while it makes

us sad—one item, at least, to put in the balance on the right side. In talking this over with me once, Gregory said, “I think that was the happiest day of all my life; my mother and I seemed so thoroughly of one accord, and I can at least know, that if I behaved badly to my mother many times, yet I once saw her perfectly happy in my company.” Then I turned my back on him, for I saw that his eyes were full of tears. Then I tried with my simple philosophy to come to his consolation. “You may depend on it, Gregory,” said I, “that for one happy recollection which the son carries with him, the mother’s heart bears fifty. It is very hard to wound a mother’s heart so that it bears the scar long—or, at all events it is so in the case of a mother like yours.” So the subject dropped.

Although Gregory remembered thus gratefully, many years afterwards, this day with his mother, yet the impression made upon him at the time was but temporary. When he parted from her in the evening at the station, he felt very lonely and dull, and full of good resolutions. He must, for his mother’s sake, try to be steady; he knew very well that he was not living as he ought. He would give up billiards, which pursuit, at this moment, he regarded with loathing; and—yes—he would also give up smoking. This conclusion

arrived at, he was stopped by the Proctor, who requested him to call on him the next morning for the offence of walking without cap and gown.

When he got back to his lonely room, he felt very miserable still. There were the tea things ready as usual, though, generally, they were brought in only as a matter of form; the kettle was steaming on the hob. But there was somehow about the room the same air of gloom which hung over his own spirit. It was but a common enough feeling, after all. He was but a boy, and he had just parted with his mother; and the last time that a meal had been served in that room, his mother had been with him—that was all.

Gregory felt exceedingly virtuous. He had made a vow that he would not smoke any more. After all, smoking was unnatural, and he could do very well without it; but as long as he had pipes and tobacco, the temptation was too strong for him, so he determined to remove the temptation. He had three pipes, one a short clay or cutty, one meerschau in a case, carefully preserved and polished, and another with a large bowl and a long cherry stem. These must be sacrificed: so he set to work smashing, crashing, and burning, and cast the whole of his stock of tobacco into the fire as well, just as if he had been in the middle of some desert, where such an act would have been irre-

mediable, instead of being in full view of the tobacconist's over the way. This idea did not, however, occur to him, for, as I have said, he had not yet learned to think; nor did it occur to him at that time that he owed a bill of £4 18s. 9d. for those very articles which he had just destroyed. Perhaps that was because the bill had not yet been sent in.

However, it being by this time half past ten, Gregory thought he had better go to bed, and he retired, feeling very virtuous still, and soon fell asleep.

As Gregory returned from his visit to the Proctor the next morning, having contributed five shillings towards the university chest in the way of a fine, several St. Pancras men, who had accompanied him on similar errands, proposed, although the hour was illegal, a visit to the billiard room. Of course Gregory went, and also, of course, he found billiards very insipid without tobacco. So the sequel of Gregory's virtuous resolutions was a largely increased bill at the tobacconist's over the way.

A good deal of mischief is caused in this world by what are called generous or virtuous impulses.

A resolution, however good, adopted in a hurry, and acted upon in haste, is sure to lead to bad results, because in making such a resolution we

do not calculate our own resources. Let a man, before deciding on his course of action, think carefully first whether he is likely to have strength enough, or to gain strength enough, to carry him through; for one good resolution defeated, and going for nothing, is equal to many bad ones in full work.

This, I think, may be the true meaning of that Parable of our Lord and Master concerning the man whose last state was worse than his first. This little episode in Gregory's career struck a great blow at his self-respect, and he found it very hard afterwards to act wisely.

Gregory used to improve the occasion, when, years afterwards, he related to me this occurrence in his early life.

"If I had only looked over the way, and had had at that time any sense of honour, instead of destroying my pipes and wasting my tobacco, I should have quietly filled one of the pipes, lighted it, and thought the whole matter over with the help of the smoke. You may depend upon it that there is always something worth looking at over the way. In that case it was only a tobacconist's shop; and it has become a maxim to me never to form a resolution without first looking across the road.—I remember," continued this philosopher, (his audience being his wife, Gregory junior, and

myself,) "I remember once an occurrence which happened to myself about sixteen years ago, before—in fact—(with a glance at his partner) when I was not so wise as I am now. At that time I used to keep on my table a portrait of a young lady; it was in a neat little frame, silver gilt."

I regarded Mrs. Hawkshaw in astonishment, for this revelation was indeed new to us both.

"One day I received some news which agitated me very much, and the nature of which is immaterial. I had not then lost that cursed impulsiveness with which I used to be afflicted, and I took the picture, frame and all, and flung it out of the window. The next day I had to pay a man a shilling for bringing it back again. You see I was not at that time, Bessy, a philosopher."

"And you never alluded to this before in my presence, sir," said Bessy, with mock severity.

"Well, you see, the fact is that a man does not always like to tell that he has been a fool."

"Then you acknowledge that you were in love?"

"Oh, if that's your idea of being a fool, why—"

"Answer my question, sir. You were in love with this young lady before you married me?"

"Well, I fancied that I was, perhaps, but I soon got over it; and when another young lady hunted me down, and married me by force—"

"For shame, sir—for shame!"

* * * * *

Now all this was new to me, though, as it may be supposed, I was on very intimate terms with this family; but Gregory junior has very kindly supplied me with the details of these transactions, along with much more information, which will be found distributed throughout this history.

CHAPTER VI.

GREGORY falsified Dr. Slowman's prediction by passing triumphantly his "Little-go" examination; and returned, with his honours thick upon him, to pass the long vacation. During this period of four or five months, he did not get on at all happily with his mother. He had a fancy that he was always treated harshly, and he could not help drawing parallels between the freedom allowed to other young men whom he knew, and the restraint to which his mother wished to subject him. He had, however, one resource in this vacation, namely—fishing, of which he was very fond. Better than all the amusements of the town, better even than billiards, was it to Gregory to spend pleasant hours by the river's side, exercising the skill of his craft. I think that title of old Izaak's, "The contemplative man's recreation," is a very unhappy one. The kind of fishing that is recreation for a contemplative man, is only an excuse for lounging. The man who goes out to catch fish—and glories in it—must contemplate

nothing but the state of the stream and of his tackle. The contemplative man might as well sit on the bank without a fishing-rod as with one; and Gregory was an enthusiast and a good fisherman, in whose line contemplation was not.

And to show that even at this time my hero's character was not quite destitute of firmness, I may state that he never on any occasion lent his rod, or any of his tackle, to any one. And this necessitated saying "no" more than once.

Every man that is worth anything at all, possesses something which he will not lend.

I leave money out of the question, because no one likes to lend that, whether he have much or little, whether he have worked for it or not.

The man who is ready to lend everything shows clearly that he appreciates nothing.

Do you suppose that Diogenes would have lent his tub to a fellow cynic? to his dearest disciple? to any one on this earth? Doubtless the tub would not have been hurt by having clothes washed in it, and very probably the soap-suds would have acted beneficially on the interior; but no—he might have lent his lantern with a due caution to the borrower, but his tub! perish the thought—never! My friends, every man has his tub, though he may not always choose to sit in it; and if you tumble over it you are very lucky

if you escape with whole shins, and without being sworn at.

What is this old-fashioned talk about tubs and lanterns? Cynics don't live in tubs now-a-days, but turn them upside down, and stand on them to deliver lectures. The man who goes about with a lantern in these days, is in search, not of an honest man to admire, but of a fool to victimize; and as there are many fools in the world, so are there many men with lanterns.

Gregory said that he would always be miserable if he knew that any one else was using his fishing-rod; and I think, for my part, that he was quite right in refusing to lend it.

In spite of this fishing, it must be owned that this long vacation was not a pleasant time, because the mother and son grew to understand one another less and less.

Mrs. Hawkshaw had always claimed the right of reading her son's letters: this was another source of discomfort and quarrel. I think that the very best of young men must receive sometimes letters which they do not care to show to their mothers. Gregory, I am sorry to say, received many such; some containing bills from tradesmen; others notes from his college friends, entering into details which would seem to his mother shocking, but which were really innocent

enough. So it may be imagined that unpleasant scenes often took place on the arrival of the postman.

There are some parents who turn their young adrift from the nest before they are well fledged, and there are others who are never willing to regard their offspring as fledged, and ready to depart. Mrs. Hawkshaw belonged to this latter class.

We must linger no longer over these early times, but pass on to the end of Gregory Hawkshaw's career at college, of which I purpose to give only one or two closing scenes. A period of three years must be supposed to have elapsed, during which Gregory has managed to scramble somehow through his college duties and work, spending much time and all his ready money on enjoyment, and incurring a huge mountain of debt.

Scene the first.—Gregory is waiting at a small door in the corner of an old scholastic quadrangle, in company with several other youths, breathless, pale, "white chokered." The door opens, and a solemn train of Dons, grave, sedate, crimson-hooded, book-bearing, issues forth; then a seedy-looking individual is seen at the door, bearing in one hand certain strips of paper. Rush of youths, pale-faced, &c., towards seedy individual. The

seedy individual reads amidst a profound silence. "Mr. Brown, St. Ann's 'All." Mr. Brown pays his shilling, receives one of the slips of paper, and sends his mortar-board skimming across the quad. "Mr. Bright, Trinity"—similar demonstrations of delight on the part of that gentleman. "Baldwin, of Corpus," and "Midkins, of Magdalene," are evidently steady men, and accept their certificates as a matter of course; but alas! there is no certificate for Hawkshaw, of St. Pancras'.

Yes, Gregory was plucked, but he had grown so reckless that he did not care very much for that, and by the side of his debts this seemed but a minor calamity, for the tradesmen, once so civil and polite, were now transformed into angry persistent duns, who gave him little peace. Gregory could not pass up or down the stairs of his lodgings, for he was now, according to college regulations, lodging in the town, without meeting three or four of these followers of his, and he was beginning to see now that the future was very misty before him, for he knew that he could not expect his mother to pay his debts for him.

On that day that he was plucked, Gregory determined just to run up to town, with an acquaintance of his, who was also in want of change of scene to console him. These things are easily managed at the university—Gregory gave orders to

the servant to put his name down in the evening as having entered at eleven, and to draw his commons as usual, and went with his friend to the station. As I have said, Gregory was utterly reckless at this time, and happening to have a few pounds in his pocket, did not hesitate to spend them in this way. In due time these young gentlemen reached London, and having dined freely at the "Cabbage Stalk," in Covent Garden, sallied out to enjoy themselves. Now Gregory's companion was town bred, and knew the town and its ways; whereas, to Gregory, London life was a sealed book.

After repairing in company to various haunts of pleasure the friends parted, promising to meet again at the hotel; and Gregory, who was, as he had been before once or twice in his life, intoxicated, found himself he did not exactly know how, seated in a crowded room with some mixture or other in front of him on a small table, and regarding sleepily, some revolving tableaux, representing, as the exhibitor expressed it, "Faith, 'Ope, and Charity, with other classical and sentimental subjects."

Presently the people in the room began to drop away a few at a time, and Gregory was left almost alone. The owner of the exhibition came up to our hero and whispered in his ear,

"Would you like, sir, to go into the green room and see the ladies."

The next morning Gregory had a dreadful headache!

I wish you, if you please, to mark the climax, and I consider that it is very neatly put. Were I a fashionable novelist, I should have made something very different out of this episode of my story.

Why, the life and doings of Mademoiselle Hortense Checkerill, for instance, (alias Kitty Dobbs), who represented 'Ope, would make a delightful novel in three volumes, at 31s. 6d., not to mention the fame to the author. I declare that when I am forced, as here, to allude to something very disagreeable and wicked, I cannot help coveting the talents and pens which have produced such works as "Lady Bowdley's Guilt," or "Not Married, but its all the same."

Not being a fashionable author, I must be content here to state that nothing very wrong went on after all. After being induced to part with all his money and his watch, Gregory was bundled out into the street by two men, his interview with the ladies having proved a myth and a snare.

He managed to find his way penniless and watchless to his hotel, and woke, as I have said,

with a bad headache. How, or why, he entered such a den he could never remember.

Here, in order to vindicate myself from any possible charge of sneering, I must state that I have only one feeling towards my fellow-labourers in literature—I look upon them with compassion, as brethren in misfortune. In order to guard myself against a certain temptation, I have, in the compilation of this work, taken care to throw out continued hints and suggestions, which render a false step almost impossible on my part. I mean that naturally, as an author, I write with the fear of the public and the reviewers before my eyes, and having a hero over whom I wield the power as it were of life and death, I am often tempted to use that power despotically. I think the reason why so many people read novels in preference to graver matter, or to real history, is that they have a great faith in this absolute power which the novelist possesses. The novelist has at his command the whole chapter of accidents, the Ten Commandments, and untold wealth. He is richer than Rothschild, in that he can confer as many millions of pounds sterling, as many acres of land as he pleases, upon one of his favourites, merely by a stroke of his pen. He can at any time draw a cheque upon a bank in which his credit is unlimited.

But for all that, the position of the novelist is unfortunate. The public is too exacting. What is the use, says the public, of having at your command all these resources, if you don't use them? What is the use of having at your mercy the Ten Commandments, if you don't cause them to be broken, and twisted, and defied, as they are broken, and twisted, and defied every day and all day long, in London, for instance? And so the author is sadly tempted to become a slave to the popular taste, instead of writing as his mother wit would suggest to him.

It is, as I have hinted just now, in order to guard myself against any surrender of independence, that I have from time to time represented my hero as settled down quietly and honestly, married and prosperous. In very rare instances, kings and governors are said to have resigned their power for the good of those subject to them; so by thus anticipating the fate of my hero, I have resigned the right to place him in many an interesting situation.

If hereafter my hero gets into peril, the interest of the position will be gone, because I am pledged to the public that he will come safe out of the encounter. Whatever ingenuity I may display in effecting his rescue, will be utterly thrown away. People will read it all with the kind of feeling

which might impel an extreme religionist, or a fatalist, to object to vaccination or blue pill. Alexandre Dumas (or rather one of his workmen) made a great mistake when he selected the execution of Charles the First for a sensation chapter. He may have counted rather too much on the ignorance of his readers about English History. How else could he expect people to read with much interest that mysterious and daring episode in "*Vingt Ans Après*," where the king is all but carried off from the scaffold, and even the trial itself is a rendezvous for the audacious conspirators.

It is this *all but* that spoils the whole for those readers who are acquainted with the fact that Charles was actually beheaded. When Blondin took to the low rope, he was only an ordinary acrobat. A man who pushes his head between the jaws of a stuffed lion, performs a very ordinary feat, however life-like the representation may be.

So, every one to his taste, and there is no reason why, because I am not a "sensational writer" myself,—I don't assume any right, I say, to sneer at those who follow that particular trade. Who can tell me as I write, to what jeers or sneers I may not be laying myself open—shall my dull platitudes, my foolish, stale, old-fashioned cynicism be held up to the deserved scorn of a public

who have never read my work? My friends, let us all be charitable, if our temperament and employments allow us to be so. There is all kinds of work to be done in this world, and the less of unmannerly jostling and envious detraction in the doing, the better for the world. Suppose that a bishop in lawn sleeves were to push rudely against a chimney sweep, both parties might suffer by the encounter.

Vulgo dictum.

CHAPTER VII.

I APPEAL to any of my drunken friends whether it is not a very difficult thing to wind up one's watch? One is always seized at the critical moment, just when the key has found the hole, with an inopportune itching about the region of the chin, (both hands being occupied), the key always drops, and one knocks over the candlestick in the efforts to pick it up. This bit of pleasantry I insert as a gentle means of bringing back the reader's attention to Gregory and his doings.

We return, however, to find him plunged,—as a sensation writer might put it,—“plunged in the very lowest abysm of human misery.” (Why not abyss, if one must allude to any cavity?) In the first place he has a dreadful headache—but headache is, after all, a very poor word to use in describing his condition. The only method that I can suggest of arriving at a thorough appreciation of such a state is to take the following recipe:—

“Spend an evening in London, taking care to visit a good many places of refreshment. Eat at

intervals salmon, chicken, lobster, oysters; drink also at intervals beer, porter, sherry, champagne, cherry brandy. Go to bed jolly and forget all about it, and in the morning try to tabulate your ideas on your own condition, or on any other given subject."

Gregory, you may remember, was saved any difficulty in winding up his watch over night, by the fact that he had lost it, in company with all his money. As soon as he was in a lively enough state to attend to anything external, he was for going at once to a magistrate, but the landlord of the "Cabbage Stalk," to whom he had confided his adventure, dissuaded him from this step, on the very sensible grounds that the most he could do would be to make a fool of himself. This genial host also lent the young gentleman enough money to enable him to return to the university.

But when I talked just now about the abyss or abysm of human misery, I meant to convey that Gregory's physical condition was the least part of his trouble; for the light had gradually dawned on him that he was utterly ruined, and in a very bad way indeed. Another term at the university was for him out of the question, even if, after being twice plucked, the college authorities would have let him stay. He knew, or thought, that his debts would be an insurmountable obstacle.

Not that even then he could bring himself to face his position properly: if he had only done that, all might have been well with him. University tradesmen, that much abused race, are long-suffering, and many of them kindly enough in their dealings and treatment. They often have, and show, more consideration for a young man's character and prospects than has the young man himself. But Gregory had no friend near to advise him, or to tell him this. It is the nature of youth to put off the evil day as long as possible, but when it does come to magnify its terrors. I wonder how many young men have made utter shipwreck of life because they have been unable to form a just appreciation of their position.

During all this three years past, Mrs. Hawkshaw had been supplying her son, not illiberally, with money. She had soon found out the fallacy of those first advisers of hers, and she always felt a persuasion that Gregory was not living the life at college which should become him; but through it all she clung desperately to that strange aspiration about the bishopric, and felt sure that all would come right at last.

To do Gregory so much justice, he had never been taken into his mother's confidence, and he therefore had very vague notions as to her resources, though he knew she was not very rich. Nor, I

think, was he aware to what an extent the pinching, and scraping, and working was carried at home, in order that he might be supplied with funds. If he had thought, he would have soon guessed at much that he did not find out till afterwards.

These prodigals always have the best of the parental affection, and usually the largest share of the inheritance. I remember that when that parable used to be read and explained to me, I could never help letting all my sympathy go with the elder brother. It used to seem to me that really his case was a hard one.

He who stayed at home and was good, and never gave his father any trouble that we know. —He, I say, seems to have got little credit for his goodness. His scapegrace brother comes home to disgrace the family before the guests invited to spend the evening, and everything must give way to him. I have little doubt that that robe, and the ring, and the fatted calf, with which the father was so liberal, were really the property of the elder brother, and I don't wonder at that brother's vexation. In Gregory's case, it is true, there was no elder brother, but there were sisters who were fed badly, and dressed badly, for a very long time, while their brother was living luxuriously, and dressing and adorning himself in an almost princely style; and you may

be sure that if this was the case, Mrs. Hawkshaw was the most self-denying of all, as far as her own person went; and I verily believe that if Gregory in this time of trouble had gone to her and told her all, she would have paid his debts for him, had the effort cost what it might. It was only fear of a scene and shame that kept Gregory from taking this course. He had no better motives to influence him than these, for he was in truth intensely selfish. Not with natural selfishness, however, as I, who knew him well, can testify.

"Selfishness is the natural and normal condition of the greater part of mankind—good-nature is an accident or freak," (said Gregory to me in one of our conclaves.) "Good-nature is an infinite capacity for being taken in."

Somehow Gregory always had ready, apropos of anything that happened to him, some villainous apothegm of this kind. The outburst in question was the result of the conduct of his wife's cousin, who had borrowed fifty pounds from him for the purpose of setting up in business, and had run away to America instead.

"Good-nature," said Gregory, "is an infinite capacity for being taken in."

And indeed, a novelist might find some grains of truth in this definition.

This world may be compared to a crowded thoroughfare, where men are crowding, hurrying, jostling, each intent on his own business or pleasure. The good-natured people are those who go out willingly to make room for others, into the muddy kennel, or among the coach wheels and the heels of the horses. The hurrying passers stare at them and laugh, the cabmen curse them and the lads revile, thanks come from no one, yet they still go on, and sacrifice themselves for others' good. Some humble, good-natured Samaritan finds a traveller by the road side, wounded, bleeding, penniless. He goes across to him, and does good offices, and then he places him on his own good beast, and all the way on foot to Jericho he trudges by his side. He gives him money ere he leaves, providing for his comfort, and the man he has helped revives, and tells to all his friends, how some eccentric stranger nearly killed him with stinking oil and acid poisonous wine. Yes, I can fancy that man going about rattling the change of the twopence in his pocket, and talking about the eccentricities of the Samaritan. Is it not good then to be kind and self-sacrificing? Yes assuredly, only in this world virtue must be its own reward, and let it be thankful for that privilege. So much so, that were I the exponent of wordly doctrines, I would say,

My friends, if you wish to get on in this world, study to harden your hearts. If you feel any inclination to be good-natured, crush it down at once. Good-nature never prospers. Selfishness is the best policy.

Very unchristian doctrine this, but did I not say *if* I were to preach the doctrine of the world—mark that *if*, for who does preach the doctrine of the world? And I may ask further, which of us frames his actions in accordance with the preaching to which he listens? “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to”—Fancy a bishop going through the eye of a needle!

“Blessed are ye poor.” Take courage curates, yours is the blessing. I can fancy the most pious monarch in Europe saying his real creed something after this fashion:—

“I believe I shall live on the broad scroll of fame;
I have carved out a throne with my sword,
Smashed women and children in piety’s name,
And shed blood in the fear of the Lord.

Who talks of the Gospel? Avaunt, hold your row,
I laugh at your silly tradition;
We’ve got a *new* Gospel in (say) Tartary, now
And *this* is the latest edition.

Thrice blessed are the powerful, and down with the poor,
The *strong* shall inherit the land,

The makers of peace shall be blessed no more,
They're a puling and pitiful band.

My foes I must hate, and, if possible, cheat;
And if a man's down—why I'll hit him,
And even supposing he own that he's beat
And wants to get up, I won't let him.

This creed and no other my actions shall guide,
The old one is simply my eye;
And I hope that in it I may steadfast abide,
And walk in the same till I die."

Is it not true, every word of it; and do not we all know that Christianity only exists among us as a huge satire on our daily life, our doings as nations and individuals?

But to what use does all this outcry tend? Some one may say, it is old, effete, stale, this satirical twaddle. My friends there's nothing new under the sun. We go to church Sunday after Sunday, and listen to the same prayers, and make the same confessions. The preacher gets up and spins out his dreary half-hour with comments on the same glorious truths which we all know by heart, but which few of us regard as truths; and so the world spins round—a fine world for the cynic, this, my masters. Perhaps you may think that it is merely out of spite or spleen that the cynic rails against the existing order of things, that there is no moral underneath his bitterness.

You may compare him vindictively to the traveller from Dan to Beersheba who found every thing barren; but for my part, I prefer that traveller to the man who finds good in everything, and neglects or refuses to see the evil. And the moral to be drawn from the cynic's railing is, that nobody can deny its truth. Hypocrisy and sham are the breath of our nostrils, but of course no one likes to be reminded of such a disagreeable truth as that. But I am getting into regions far away from my story, which after all is but a feeble thread which I use to string together certain things which I have to say.

* * * * *

It wanted but a few days to the end of the term when Gregory got back to the university, and before the end came, it behoved him to decide on some course of action. He was naturally light-hearted, but the state of his affairs was such as would suffice to appal the gayest. All day long and every day, he was met, wherever he might betake himself, by demands for money. Young men who run recklessly into debt, little think what ghastly trouble they are laying up for themselves. The lies and evasions to which they will one day be forced to have recourse—the shamefacedness, the mean expedients for raising petty sums, the deceptions which must

be practised on those near and dear to them. All these things must come home to them at a future time. Then comes that horrible feeling of *cui bono*? what have I of solid advantage to put in the balance against all this misery?

Gregory's debts, though very large for a man in his position, were at the same time a trifle, compared to those of some other men whom he knew, as one of the kindlier creditors ventured to say to him.

"Lord bless you, sir, I could name a dozen as owes pounds where you owe shillings—don't be down-hearted." A man must have fallen pretty low when his tradesmen venture thus to address him. This happened one morning when Gregory was seated at his table, hopelessly trying to gain an idea of some kind by looking over a whole collection of bills. His affairs were then, he knew, the subject of general conversation all over the university. In thinking this he was perhaps mistaken, for there is nothing harder for a man, young or old, than to appreciate exactly the amount of interest which other people take in his affairs. We are either apt to conduct our affairs as if our neighbours ignored our doings altogether, or we are inclined to fancy that people give us more than our proper share of attention.

Besides his debts to tradesmen, Gregory had borrowed money also, for which he had given IOU's and notes of hand.

Now somebody may be curious enough to ask what had he done with all his ready money? of which he had received considerable sums, both from the college and from his mother. Well, Gregory never knew himself precisely how it had gone; a good deal went in paying for country dinners, and stolen excursions of various kinds, but I think most of it was absorbed by billiard and card playing. The card gambling only came in the last two terms. Gregory played billiards well, and fancied that he could play just four times as well as he really did play, and he was very nervous. In fact he was just that kind of easy-going foolish person who is looked upon as fair spoil quite in an honourable way, in public billiard-rooms, both at the universities and elsewhere. He had a passion for a game called pool, at that time very fashionable at the university, and his losses at this pastime were so gradual and insidious, that he very often regarded them as no losses at all; and now and again he used to win a few shillings back from the pounds already lost, so that his delusion was strengthened. Of course it is pretty well known that nobody wins in the long run at such public games—the only winner

is the table. Another fatal thing was that Gregory was always ready for a bet, and in this way he expended many pounds.

Then in his last two terms he became acquainted with the card-playing set, and took to *Ving-et-un*, and loo, limited and unlimited, and 'cutting the pack' for sovereigns, and even tossing up for the same coins, of which at the best of times he had but few. I think this slight sketch will go far to account for most of Gregory's ready money.

Often when his mother was lying sleepless, praying for him, Gregory was sitting up eager and excited with drink and gambling, until the chapel bell began to ring, and he hurried to his duties there, without a thought that there was any meaning in the words he was going to hear.

There is much to be said, perhaps, in favour of these 'college chapels,' but I think there is more that might be justly urged against them. This is a question which may fairly be called an open one, and the discussion of which may be possibly interesting, but certainly can do neither good nor harm. In these reforming days we have at least this to be thankful for, that we possess two institutions which no one would ever think seriously of reforming. What! lay a sacrilegious hand on one of our universities! why

the church is in danger at once; and not only the church, but the constitution. The shades of the mighty dead would rise to protest against the removal of a single atom of the rubbish amidst which their names, their material essence, have reposed so long in peace! Rubbish, do I say?—yes, but that kind of rubbish which derives untold value from antiquity. An ancient helmet, though admittedly it have been once worn by Julius Cæsar, would probably not serve in these days to boil potatoes in; but still it would be valuable to those who care about such things.

We English are especially fond of our rubbish heaps, if only they are ancient enough. No, thank heaven, we are Englishmen, and there is no serious question of University reform among us. But about College chapels.—There are few people who are not aware that the ecclesiastical element has almost entirely faded out from University life in England. English Universities are now either used as seminaries of advanced scholarship, or as finishing schools of gentility. The only logical reason that can now be alleged for selecting our clergymen from those who have taken an academical degree, is, that in England we expect that our clergymen shall be to a certain extent well-informed, and, above all, gentlemen. As to special training for the Church, there may be said to be none at all.

It is a great advantage, as far as it goes, that our clergymen should be thus selected: let any one who doubts this go to Russia, and study the priesthood there. Ignorant, ill-mannered, dirty, having just enough acquaintance with the outward forms and ceremonies of superstition to be able to perform decently their office—they are only raised just so high above the peasant, as to be brought within the range of the nobles' scorn. Certainly our two Universities do this much for us, that they give us the best educated and most polished priesthood in Europe; but there ends their work as far as the priesthood is concerned. This being so, and it being understood that there are large numbers of young men at the universities who are destined for other professions than the church, or for none at all, it follows that the training, the thoughts, the amusements, and employments, of the great mass of undergraduates are purely secular. Now why should each individual in this mass of undergraduates be compelled to attend at any daily church service whatever? People will answer at once, for the welfare of their souls. And again, this is the only logical reason that can be given. What! am I to be compelled to go to church, and then to be told that my soul has benefitted by an act which I certainly should not have

performed without the compulsion? (I only put the case.) If I am compelled to go to church, the church, or chapel is to me a prison, the preacher or reader is to me a gaol chaplain. I become familiar with the service of my church as something which comes into the day's work, and this familiarity breeds contempt and dulness of heart, and indifference. I rise hastily in the morning, and grumble as I dress, in a slovenly way it is true, but any dress is good enough for chapel. I hurry into that holy place, and lounge, and think of anything but the service, or laugh and whisper. Are many of us old enough to remember "Iniquity Corner," I wonder? Meanwhile the chaplain for the day gabbles through his match against time, and all go off to breakfast, with pipes and miscellaneous conversation immediately afterwards—and my soul is benefitted!

Again, suppose I prefer lying in bed in the morning. I return from my afternoon's amusement according to my taste, of boating, billiards, cricket, riding; I take my chapel as a kind of compulsory tonic, which gives me an appetite for my dinner, like sherry and bitters; or, supposing that the chapel comes after dinner, it affords an agreeable period for lazy digestion—and my soul is benefitted!

I do not take an extreme case, it is merely

that of those who, without compulsion, would not attend chapel, and the rest,—let us hope, a large majority would, of course, go willingly and thoughtfully.

Remains then the plea that attendance at chapel is a necessary part of college discipline. Those who argue thus, are unconsciously adopting the argument of those who of old sold doves, and changed money in the temple, (odd congregation, money changing and the selling of the innocent!) *They* doubtless thought that their trade, as they conducted it, was right and proper and necessary. But mark what says He with the scourge, “My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it——” And to what use do our colleges turn their chapels? They are either mustering grounds for their undergraduates, or pretexts for extortion.

From all which, we arrive at this conclusion, that, allowing the excellence and desirability of having college services, those only should attend them who have a desire so to do; but I sadly fear that decency will continue, to the end of the chapter, to give way to antiquity.

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do? It seems to be a general rule that when a man disgraces himself, or fails to get on in his own country, he becomes possessed with the idea that he will do infinitely better in another.

It must be some such self-delusion which possesses a man on his death-bed after an ill-spent life, when he desires and hopes that he shall go to heaven, and thinks with rapture of the joys of paradise. Is it distance, in both cases, than lends enchantment to the view?

So Gregory's one idea was, that he must go abroad somewhere—what knew he or cared where? America, New Zealand, Australia—anywhere out of England would be all the same—and he would soon get into some comfortable situation, and be able to save money to pay his debts; and then he would return home a rich man and share his prosperity nobly with his relations. I wonder whether there is a book kept anywhere, in which these fanciful generosities are recorded? How many men, like Gregory, deal out time in the most generous manner with imaginary thousands! To people who indulge in day dreams of wealth and honour, it is so easy to be generous—it is only to imagine one's self a little richer, to stretch the fancy a little further. And in this day dream Gregory actually arrived at a point where he could not help admiring himself for his kind-

ness of heart and generosity.

But the first step towards the realization of all this, was to get possession of a sum of money; for though he could imagine himself growing rich in one of those countries, without actually going there, yet he could not stretch his imagination so far as to fancy himself carried thither without expense.

Money he must have, at all events, and however he could get it. He expected to receive about ten pounds from the college, after his account had been settled; and then it suddenly flashed upon him, there was the "caution money"—ten pounds—a sum which the college had required him to place in its hands at first, as a guarantee. Then he could get ten pounds from his mother on some pretext or other, and he had clothes and other property which he could sell, and get ten pounds more—so he thought. Forty pounds in all, of which twenty were rather dubious, for he was not sure whether the college would give him the "caution money" or not. He was, however, just over twenty-one, and he could try. He did not exactly know how to set about selling the clothes and things either. In the middle of all these calculations, a peremptory message came from his tutor, who demanded to see him at once.

There was only one course now, for if he went

to his tutor, he knew that the interview would involve a letter to his mother. So he went at once to the college, and requested the butler to remove his name from the books. "I suppose you've seen Mr. Bakewell, sir, or Dr. Slowman?" said the butler rather dubiously. *He* had evidently heard something, like the rest, like the obsequious porter and the grinning spies whom he had seen in a knot holding converse.

"Yes," said Gregory, "I've just come from him," and jesuitically consoled himself by the reflection that having mentioned no names, he had told no lie. The butler gave him the caution money, took a receipt, and Gregory Hawkshaw walked away—no longer a member of the university. Then he went to break the news to his tutor, who received him kindly, and began a lecture about being plucked, but Gregory cut him short—"I've just taken my name off the books, sir."

The tutor, who was a kind and good man enough, was very shocked. He begged, and got angry, and remonstrated—but Gregory was impervious; he would not even tell his tutor what he intended to do, nor promise to consult his mother in everything.

Thence he went across the quadrangle (it was then about two o'clock), hardly noticing in his

haste and anxiety the men who greeted him as he passed, and called at the burser's rooms, explained that he had seen the tutor and was 'going down' at once, and after some delay and difficulty received from him thirteen pounds. Then a sudden fear seized him, lest his tutor or Dr. Slowman should write to his mother before he himself was able to do so. So he dashed back to his lodgings, wrote a hurried note, alleging he hardly knew what excuse for being in urgent want of ten pounds—this letter he posted with his own hand.

The letter despatched, Gregory returned, sick at heart, to his lodgings, and sat down despondently. He could not fix his attention on any occupation; he sat with his head leaning in his two hands, and his elbows on the table, and suddenly an astonishing event happened to him—Gregory began to think, and his first thought was, "What a fool I have been!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A TERRIBLE thought that, if the words are used with any meaning. It is very seldom that a man can get further than this in selfcondemnation, except in church, where he is encouraged by company. It is a consolation to feel then, that, maybe two or three hundred fellow christians are all confessing themselves, in words more or less audible, to be miserable sinners. It is true that those of us who do not utter the confession altogether mechanically, usually use it with some mental reservation. A duchess, for example, is certainly not such a miserable sinner as a costermonger. There must be an aristocracy of sinners, as of saints, else how could society go on? I say, however, that a man who condemns himself in private, and in the bitterness of his own soul seldom gets further than calling himself a fool.—There are all sorts of fools in this world,—fools natural, fools artificial, fools mechanical, fools scientific, fools superstitious, fools of belief and unbelief, fools unconscious, fools conscious. It would be very well worth the while of some writer who had the

talent and observation necessary for the work, to classify and describe these fools, but what an outcry would be raised in fooldom. Of all these fools, the only one for whom there is any hope, is that one whom I have placed last, the 'fool conscious.' Strictly speaking, he is not a fool at all, but one who thinks himself a fool, who knows that he is acting like a fool, but finds playing the fool a rather pleasant pastime. And when a man of this kind wakes up by some sudden shock to the reality of life, he is the first to say 'What a fool I have been!' though really his folly has been all a sham.

But when Gregory accused himself of having been a fool, he did not get quite so far as this. The words he used only expressed that yearning review of the past, which is not exactly either sorrow, regret, shame, or disgust, but a sort of mixture of all these feelings, which perhaps is best expressed by the word fool. He did not even yet think accurately and rightly, or he would have used some word which implied more blame on himself individually. But the proof that he had really begun to think, was, that he did nothing in a hurry, and did not alter his former resolution; for he remembered that incident of the tobacco and pipes. "And suppose," thought he, "I now go back to my mother with every intention of

amendment, if I break out again I shall be worse than ever;" and he was also actuated by a manly resolution to take his punishment, whatever it might be, without asking mitigation from any one. It was better he should take the ten pounds from his mother now, and go away, than that he should remain a burden to her. Then he thought with a pang of his mother's great sorrow, and anxiety, and disappointment; but it was too late, as he felt, to do more than think of this now. In two days the letter came containing the desired ten pounds, a sum which his mother assured him she could ill spare; and on the same evening Gregory started, under cloud of night, for London, turning his back, as he thought for ever, on the university. And perhaps the hardest thing that can be said against this Alma Mater, is that she, like other mothers, cannot appreciate or understand the characters of her own children. She treats them all alike, as if they were all of the same mental and moral calibre; and it must be acknowledged that Gregory Hawkshaw was a very troublesome infant, and would hardly have done credit to any nurse, however skilful.

Instead of going back to his old quarters at the Cabbage Stalk, Gregory secured a modest lodging in one of the streets at the back of the Strand. On the morning after his arrival he set

about arranging the sale of his property. He had a couple of rings, and a gold pin and locket, which he disposed of at various pawnbrokers; he retained only a watch and chain, which might, he thought, be useful to him. I may as well relate here what becomes of these articles, as Gregory himself told me the story:—

“I was living in a hut of green boughs that I had made for myself, and I had no place to put my watch and chain while I was out at my work, and so I put them in a tin box I had by me, and buried them in the ground, marking the place carefully; it was close to the bank of the creek. One night a thunder-storm came on, and the creek was flooded; and the ground was so altered that I never could find my box any more. I daresay it is there to this day. I spent two days looking for it, digging everywhere, and then I gave it up as a bad job.” This happened in Australia.

The next thing Gregory did was to engage a man (whose advertisement he had seen) to come from somewhere near London Bridge and buy all the clothes he had, which were not absolutely necessary for him to keep. This apparel fetched a price which would have looked ridiculous by the side of that at which they figured in his tailors' bills, but when all was finished Gregory

performed without the compulsion? (I only put the case.) If I am compelled to go to church, the church, or chapel is to me a prison, the preacher or reader is to me a gaol chaplain. I become familiar with the service of my church as something which comes into the day's work, and this familiarity breeds contempt and dulness of heart, and indifference. I rise hastily in the morning, and grumble as I dress, in a slovenly way it is true, but any dress is good enough for chapel. I hurry into that holy place, and lounge, and think of anything but the service, or laugh and whisper. Are many of us old enough to remember "Iniquity Corner," I wonder? Meanwhile the chaplain for the day gabbles through his match against time, and all go off to breakfast, with pipes and miscellaneous conversation immediately afterwards—and my soul is benefitted!

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her sister to witness that she renounced her son for ever; then bit by bit she read the rest of the letter, and after thinking it over for an hour or two she revived. Who could tell but what Gregory might yet do well and redeem the past in a new country? Nay, he might yet be a clergyman, and perhaps a bishop, only a Colonial Bishop. So when Gregory reached Auckland, he found a large post packet awaiting him, containing letters of introduction, much good and earnest advice from his mother, and ten pounds in money. During those five years Gregory was a wanderer on the face of the earth, like so many other sinners against the fifth commandment. Gregory in his wanderings met many young, well educated gentlemen, often reduced to the lowest step of the ladder of degradation, and he found that all their cases were alike in this one respect, that they had brought sorrow and trouble upon their parents. When afterwards, Gregory used to maintain that this world was not a place of rewards and punishments, this recollection always used to stagger him. "It is evident," said Gregory, "that what is called folly or wildness in a man's youth, must, in the nature of things, act injuriously upon the man of maturer years. Was the case of these men then, these broken down swells, only a coincidence? was my own case only a coincidence? In so far as these cases

correspond exactly with the terms of the commandment! The gospel teaching certainly does not favour much the idea of earthly punishments for earthly offences." But I will give Gregory's matured views on this point hereafter.

During these five years, then, Gregory Hawkshaw was a vagabond. He dug potatoes, cut flax, and fought the Maories in New Zealand. Passing over to Australia, he dug for gold, kept sheep, drove bullocks and horses there, he acted as a stoker for some time on board of a steamer that traded between Wellington, N.Z., and Melbourne; he worked his passage from Melbourne to Calcutta on board a large ship, and finding no employment there, he worked his passage back again to Melbourne.

Gregory was surprised to find, that in spite of his education, and letters of introduction, he was regarded by the British colonists as rubbish.

After Gregory's return to England he was very fond, when he was in the humour, of telling stories of his wanderings about the world. As it would be impossible to give in this work any circumstantial account of these wanderings, it will be better to retail here one or two of these stories, telling them as nearly as possible in Gregory's own words. Some were related to me personally, others have come to me through tradition, and from my acquaintance with the family.

CHAPTER IX.

"WHEN I had been about six months in New Zealand," said Gregory, "I was employed digging potatoes, and carting them down to Auckland with a team of four bullocks, and for this work I got eight shillings a week. I thought myself, at that time, very lucky to get that. Well, one day I was driving my team down, and we stuck in the mud in crossing a creek. You know there are no bridges there, but you get over the best way you can, through water, and mud, and everything. This delayed me about a couple of hours, so that I had to travel after dark to get into Auckland. It is not pleasant work driving in the dark in these bush roads; sometimes the bullocks got off the track and tie themselves in a knot round a tree, or the dray falls bodily over into a hole, or gets jammed between two stumps. I was about two miles from the town, and going along smoothly enough, when the bullocks suddenly came to a stop, and instead of going on, tried to bolt off the road. I brought

them back, but there was evidently something lying in the road which they refused to pass, and it seemed to be a living creature, for I heard several grunts. A pig, thought I, and went forward with my whip to drive it out of the way. I cracked my whip—the pig did not move—only grunted. I now saw a black mass lying in front of me; I poked it with my whip-stock. It moved uneasily, and grunted. I gave it another and a harder poke, and it began slowly to rise on all fours, and I discovered that it was not a pig at all, but a man, and he was drunk, so drunk that he could not get on his legs. ‘Come, come, mate,’ said I, ‘what are you about here?’ ‘Les’ch pray,’ replied this superior animal whom I had mistaken for a pig. ‘What?’ said I. ‘Don’t be imper—imp—important (impertinent?) to a clergyman—(hic)’ said this man-beast, having managed to gain his legs by crawling up a tree with the aid of his fore paws. ‘I know your voice,’ continued he, ‘you’re Hawkshaw.’ ‘And who the devil,’ said I, ‘are you?’ ‘Why, I’m Perkins, Rev’nd Per—(hic)—kins.’ He spoke the truth, he was indeed a clergyman, and his name was Perkins. I had known him slightly in England, and had met him again in Auckland, when he recognized me, not I him. I did not like to leave him there, so I got him upon the dray with

infinite difficulty, and took him down to the town. He hardly spoke to me all the way, but when the dray stopped he asked me if I was going to 'shout,' (colonial for treating to drink.) This proposition I refused, and he rolled off, to loaf outside the door of some public-house, until he should find some one more kindly disposed. I never saw him any more, but I heard of him afterwards as being in gaol for some petty theft committed when he was intoxicated."

"What a horrible wretch!" said Gregory's mother, to whom he related this incident. "Not so very horrible, mother," replied Gregory; "I should have been just as bad, or perhaps worse, if I had taken to drinking."

"Another time," said Gregory, "I was travelling on foot on this same road, only I had no employment, and was leaving Auckland instead of going to it. My wardrobe was not in a very first-rate condition, but still everything was passable except my hat. This certainly was the most villainous head-covering that I ever saw. It was a man's hat, but when I first became acquainted with it, it was the property of a woman who sold vegetables and did odd jobs of washing, and she gave it to me to keep the sun from my head, for I had lost mine overboard from the pier, when I was fishing there. At that time half the population of the

place used to be fishing on the pier, not for amusement, so much as in hope of getting something to eat, for the times were very bad. At last the fish got very shy, and at the best of times I believe there were nearly as many fishermen as fish. At last a whole day passed, and I only caught one small fish. This was dreadful work. It is all very well to fast when one has plenty of fish to eat, and it always seemed to me that that was a very cheap way of serving God; but it is a very different thing being really hungry."—"I don't suppose," continued Gregory, "that anybody here knows what it is to be really hungry, to experience that terrible, pinching, grinding sensation, which makes one feel as if some invisible hand or claw were turning one's intestines inside out and squeezing them dry—however it doesn't matter. It happened that in my luckier days I had been able to give a fish or two to this woman who sold vegetables, and she, happening to pass me on the pier that day, said—'Good day, mate, what luck?' 'Plenty of luck,' said I ruefully, 'only it all happens to be bad luck. I've just caught a little brute as long as my hand, and I've eaten it raw!' 'And is that all,' said she, 'that you've had this day? Then come along with me, and I'll giv'ee summut.' She was vulgar, this woman, but kind-hearted and grateful—people in that rank of life sometimes are.

So I went along with her, and she gave me 'summut,' viz.: a lump of salt beef and a piece of bread. When I had done, she gave me her old hat, as I said, to keep the sun from my head. It was a hat made of some kind of brown cloth or felt, and was, as I should imagine, about six or seven years old. 'It's not dirty,' said she, 'Devil a fear, I washed it yesterday.' So I took it thankfully, and the next day went my way up the road, for I was tired of fishing. When I had gone about four miles, I came to a field of flax, and in one corner of it was a scarecrow. An idea struck me, and I walked up to it. It was tolerably well dressed, this scarecrow, in some respects better than I was. Men in the bush get a habit of soliloquizing or talking to dumb objects. I addressed the scarecrow as follows:—'So you're there, are you? and by your leave I'll look at your hat.' So I took the hat off, and placed it on the ground by the side of my own. 'Now let us see,' said I, 'which is the best? Exchange is no robbery, and you're more likely to frighten the birds with my hat than your own, I'm thinking.' The scarecrow's hat was decidedly the best, so I concluded the bargain on the spot, and continued my journey."

"And where did you go then?" joined in two or three voices. "Well, let me see," said Gregory.

"I went on till I got employed on a station farm to do odd jobs and milk cows.

I remember one morning something very curious happened to me. There was one cow that had a very long and troublesome tail, and after I had bailed her up, I used to fasten her tail on the rail of the stock-yard. On this morning when I had milked the cow, I let her out of the bail, but forgot to untie the tail, and she pulled and pulled until the tail came out at the socket; and," continued Gregory, gravely, "we—I mean I and another man—eat the tail for supper!"

Somehow when Gregory got into full swing with these stories, it was sometimes hard to tell whether he was in jest or earnest. For instance, he used to tell how in Australia he woke one morning and found a snake in his blankets, and ate it for breakfast. "I've eaten a good many snakes in my time," said Gregory, "they're not bad—something like chicken."

"But why should you eat such horrid things?"

"Why because I was hungry, to be sure, and could'nt get anything better."

"And have you really felt that horrid sensation of hunger that you described just now?" This was the way his mother and sisters used to draw him out, nothing loath to be so drawn.

"Yes, often," and I've eaten some queer things

too when I have been hungry. "There's a kind of white grub that winds in the bark of gum trees, which the blackfellows eat; they either roast them or squeeze them into their mouths raw like a gooseberry, but I never ate any of them, but I'll tell you what I have eaten though, 'Alligators' eggs.' Two of us found forty-two of them in a heap of rubbish by the side of a river, but we didn't know what they were; and I've eaten white ants, made into a kind of stew;" and so on—Gregory lying flat on his back on the hearthrug in dreamy volubility. Here is another story which I heard Gregory tell much later. "I was living in a hut with another man in some new country which had just been taken up, and one evening, as we were eating our supper before sundown, we saw a dark skinned individual, perfectly naked, issue from a piece of scrub and stand regarding us. I ran for the gun, thinking it was a blackfellow, but this individual suddenly exclaimed 'Dont shoot! me British object.'* He was a shipwrecked sailor who had been kept a prisoner by the blacks so long that he had almost forgotten his own language: he meant to say subject. Well after some trouble, we got him to come into the hut, and wouldn't let him go back to the blacks again as he wanted to, but the next day we took him into

* A fact.

the nearest station and had him sent to the township. His name was James Morell." "And," interrupted Gregory junior, with the idea of saying something witty, "was he the man who wrote the English Grammar?"

"Of course he was," said Gregory. "Don't you see he wanted to prove that he really did know the difference between the subject and the object."

Were these stories of Gregory's about hunger and destitution exaggerations? I think not. He told me himself that no words of his could possibly convey any idea of the straits to which he was reduced and the misery which he underwent. "I used each day," said he, "to long for night, when I could lie down to rest and forget my troubles. I remember one very vivid dream which I had once. I dreamt that I was at home recounting all my adventures to my family, and among other things, I thought I was telling them how the birds used to wake me up after the short nights. 'I used to *curse* the birds,' said I, and awoke with the words ringing in my ears; and sure enough the birds had just begun, and I had to go off to my work of splitting logs. This was the most vivid dream I ever had in my life." Gregory expounded to me once a peculiar theory of his about dreams.

"I believe," said he, "that most people suffer more actual torture in their dreams than they do in their

waking moments. For instance, I had the other night a horrible dream of climbing high by impossible ladders, of floating in the air without support, of having a frightful dread of falling without the possibility of descending when I wished to do so. Now it seems to me impossible that I should *fancy* myself suspended in the air when I actually *feel* that I am so suspended, and when moreover, I remember the sensation as a fact afterwards. It is true that I wake and say that it was only a dream, *i.e.*, I console myself by the thought that I am no longer where I was a few hours or minutes ago.

If the dream with all its sensations is unreal, then it seems to me that the waking life is unreal also. Some people will tell us that it is so. Let a man try ever so hard to *fancy* that he is a turnip, he will fail utterly. Yet the other night I actually was a turnip, and felt myself growing, swelling, and sprouting with all proper turnip sensations. The fact is, that all the essential parts of real existence (so called) exist in dreams—there is the capacity for pain, physical and mental; joy and sorrow, thought and care, all are present to the dreamer. How can all this be called fancy? unless fancy be the word used to denote another form of existence.

When I was in Australia, I used to live half

my life, and the best and pleasantest half too, in dreamland. What a pity that one cannot acquire the power (like the man in the story) of arranging one's dreams beforehand. I can fancy a man bespeaking his dream just as an ordinary mortal would order his dinner.

And there is not such a grand difference, after all, between dream life and waking life, for in neither case can a man tell what an hour will bring forth. We talk of the extravagance of dreams, but waking life would look just as extravagant from a dreamland point of view; but, sometimes we don't remember our dreams—granted, but is it not the same with our actions: and the fact that our dreams usually pass from us ere we wake, is only a proof that too many of our dreams are not worth remembering, have not been of such a nature as to leave their mark. But all this is mere empty speculation, and moreover that way madness lies."

I give these somewhat whimsical views of Gregory's in order to give some little insight into his character, which was very speculative; and, after all, a man's thoughts are not worth much unless they are more or less whimsical, unless they travel now and then out of the routine order of cut and dried respectability.

Moreover, during this period of his life, Gregory

was left very often to the company of his own thoughts; books or even newspapers, he rarely saw. Now he had always possessed an ill-regulated passion for reading—reading, of some kind, had always been a necessity to him, but he had never learnt to turn this passion to any account: it saved him from absolute idleness, that was all. Deprived of this resource, Gregory was driven to speculation, and this speculation, as all unassisted deep thought must, sooner or later, led him to religious doubt or enquiry. I think myself that it is better for a man morally, that he should doubt, than that he should not think at all. There are plenty of respectable orthodox people who are contented to pass their lives without knowing what it is to doubt, or to have an original idea of their own on any subject, human or divine. To these people, every man who doubts, who is troubled, may be, by such painful thoughts and mental struggles, that his very existence becomes a burden to him; every such man, I say, is to these immaculate believers, as a heathen man and a publican—some one out of the pale, and irretrievably wicked. Some people seem to be possessed with an idea that the Gospel was intended to limit thought. It would be well, of course, if it were so—if a man could allow his intellect to meddle with all subjects except that

one, which, after all, most concerns us all. It would be well if our eternal welfare could be thus secured, as it were, by contract; but this cannot be, for so surely as a man finds himself thrown on his own intellectual resources, so surely does that man begin to doubt, and that doubt is for the time a fiery furnace of trial, out of which, if the man be sincere, he will come all the purer; and the test of sincerity is, I think, that the man will not strive to lead others into the same anguish of soul into which he himself has fallen. He who arrives at this latter point is infinitely worse than the most narrow-minded bigot that ever clung blindly to a lying superstition. The bigotry of unbelief is far worse than that of belief.

I find it necessary to the elucidation of my hero's character, to sketch briefly the state of mind into which he fell at this time, in order to show *how* hereafter he eventually reached the light, and found the light all the brighter, in that he had tested and doubted its brightness.

In his wanderings Gregory met many men who had more or less fallen away from the light—men who neither spoke nor thought (as it seemed) of religion at all—men who made a small pretence of keeping to the outward form of Christianity—and men who blasphemously spoke out, not their

doubts but their folly—and at the worst of times Gregory was always disgusted by this.

When a man, by some horrible perversion of intellect, arrives at the calm conclusion that there is no God, no Heaven, he seems to be unable to hold his tongue in the matter; he becomes a monomaniac, and talks balderdash about nature and natural forces, and shocks the feelings of others by giving glimpses of the ghastly interior of his own soul. Such men act like children who are encouraged in the dark by the sound of their own voices.

CHAPTER X.

It is a curious thing that Gregory's own mother was the indirect cause of his beginning to doubt. In this way. Mrs. Hawkshaw was an ardent believer in "special providences," and this belief she applied on all occasions to every-day matters. Now when Gregory received from time to time letters from her, there was always sure to be some allusion in each, to the wonderful way in which Providence had hitherto preserved Gregory from death, for he had had several narrow escapes which he had described when writing home. At first this was received as a matter of course by Gregory, and it was such a comfortable doctrine, that he was quite flattered by it, and began to think of himself as a very great man, destined for some high or noble work, and specially preserved for that work, until one day——

Gregory went out in the morning to try to shoot enough game to make a dinner—he was at that time living with a party of men who were out prospecting for gold in the north of Australia.

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The men tossed up to decide who should go out with the gun, and the lot fell upon Gregory. First of all he kept to the plains where he got nothing but one or two parrots, for all other game was scarce. Now all along the left side of these plains, there ran in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction, a mighty wall or barrier of what the colonists call basalt; but this wall was nothing less than a huge lava stream from some extinct volcano, such a phenomenon, as is, I believe, only seen in that strange land. This 'wall' had an average breadth of about three-quarters of a mile, and was more than a hundred miles long. At that time it had never been explored, and was only the subject of unwondering remark to a stray traveller, prospector, or shepherd. It was composed of nothing but 'huge masses' and blocks of this so-called basalt, in the composition of which the action of fire could be easily detected by any one having the slightest knowledge of simple facts. But this was not all, for another mighty power had also been at work there, viz., volcanic disturbance. There was mass piled on mass in wild and picturesque boldness. Huge cracks or fissures yawned here and there, so profound that a stone dropped within them passed noiselessly away from the hand for ever. Among these barren crags and fissures, the course of time and accident, had

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accumulated here and there these sprinklings of soil, in which had taken root and grown such plants and trees as the colonists designate by the comprehensive name of scrub. The 'bottle tree' with its swelling bole, two or three species of mimoon and acacia, native fig trees with the fruit growing in clusters on the trunk, and an infinite number and variety of parasites, or colonially 'vines.' It was hard to see how all this vegetation could grow at all, for the rock was hard as iron, moreover its surface was everywhere studded with little sharp points and ridges which cut like razors. This is the description, given as nicely as possible, of a strange natural phenomenon which the author has seen, and which still exists, to puzzle or interest some future Australian geologist.

Unsuccessful on the plains, Gregory made his way into the fastnesses of this wall, treading most assuredly at each step, ground which no white man's foot had ever pressed before. The inhabitants of this barren region were a species of marsupial called the rock wallaby, a little larger than an English rabbit, and in these fastnesses just as numerous as rabbits in an English warren. The 'wall' was also a favourite resort of the blackfellows as a refuge in time of danger, and also for hunting. It was difficult work for a white man to make his way through the dense masses of vegetation, and

here and there in the open spots, where soil had not been deposited, were huge gaping chasms, impossible to jump as to sound, and extending sometimes for more than half the breadth of the 'wall.' It would have been moreover easy enough for a man to lose himself there, and wander about until he went mad, or died of thirst, for hunger was hardly to be dreaded.

However, Gregory before entering took care to have a good view of the sun, and did not even then venture far from the edge. In about half-an-hour he had shot one wallaby, but he wished before returning to get a couple more: so he continued. Now these wallabies were easily alarmed, and were not very easy to find, although there were plenty of them. Gregory, however, made up his mind to secure two more of the animals, although he was very tired of climbing, stumbling over the rocks and fighting his way through the scrub.

It so chanced that he lifted his eyes for a moment without stopping his walk, to observe the direction of the sun; at the same instant a wallaby, which had been probably asleep and thus caught unawares, sprang from some lurking place and darted off between the legs of the sportsman almost upsetting him. Gregory looked towards the ground, and there right in front of him yawned

one of those chasms of which I have spoken, and so near that the next step would have infallibly led him to destruction. Gregory started back several paces and fell crashing among the scrub. Then he sat up and began to reflect. His first idea was to thank God for his deliverance; but suddenly it occurred to him—who am I, that Providence should thus interfere in my behalf? Is it really credible or possible that that little beast should have been asleep at that point for the purpose of calling my attention to a danger which lay beyond? What was it then? chance? luck? or what? Then a great trembling came on him as he thought of the great and horrible peril from which he had been saved by this accident. Literally only a step between him and death! He had no thought now of shooting any more wallabies, but got out to the plains as soon as he could, and was lucky enough to shoot a turkey on his way back to the camp.

“Then,” thought Gregory, “it would be quite as logical to connect the death of this turkey with that wallaby which saved my life, as to suppose that the wallaby was there on purpose to warn me.” I only relate here these trivial details, because from that time, and following the train of thought thus suggested, Gregory began to doubt more and more on subjects which he had been always

trained to consider as beyond all doubt. If a man begins by thinking of the mystery of Providence, as he sees it working in the every-day round of cause and effect, the question must naturally occur to him—what part does God really play in all this? and very possibly he will begin to have doubts and misgivings on the subject, which no amount of thought or intellectual power can satisfy; and it is very likely that he will continue doubting and striving, until he arrive at that state of mind in which all the old landmarks of belief seem to fade away, or to be jumbled together, when all the old teaching once received so reverently and faithfully shall seem vain and unprofitable.

I speak of the man who has received some such special early teaching, for he that has not, and who also begins to think, is in a much more dangerous state than the other, although he will not probably feel the same amount of bitterness of soul. His thoughts will be all constructive, and he will have few barriers to surmount. Now it may be said that as long as a man is not content to remain in such a state of mind as this, all may yet be well with him. As long as a man's soul rebels within him against this slavery to thought, and revolts at the idea of any definite conclusion, so long it may be hoped that the

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man will be all the better for his doubtings. And it speaks well for Gregory, that he never could listen without disgust to men who spoke openly the doctrines of infidelity; although, for a time, he had himself no firm belief of any kind. At this time his doubts and enquiries did not extend to any controversial points, but were merely general; afterwards, when he saw more of the world and its ways, of the "vain janglings" of creed and controversy, he became unsettled on other grounds. At present we must leave this subject, over which we have spent too much time already, and follow Gregory again in his recitals.

"I should never have got to England any more," said Gregory, "if my mother had not sent out some money to pay my passage. A kind-hearted store-keeper or merchant in a small Australian township, who had been an inhabitant of our town in my father's time, wrote to my mother without my knowledge, and told her that I was in a very miserable condition, and that I should not live very long unless I returned to England.

Indeed I was in a very miserable condition, I had had two or three attacks of fever and ague, which had pulled down my strength very much, and my health was quite broken by exposure and hardships. I had not long before worked my passage back from Calcutta as a common

sailor. The money reached me under rather singular circumstances. In company with another man, an old sailor, who, however, had worked for a long time in Canada as an axeman, I had taken a contract to clear a piece of scrub for a market gardener, who lived on the bank of the river Mackey, on the side opposite the township. The gardener wanted the job done, because the blacks used to approach his garden under cover of this scrub, and throw spears at him while he was at work. After we had worked at this a little while my mate gave up, declaring that we should not earn enough; and finding it useless to continue by myself, I had to shoulder my blankets and start up the road again, to look for what work I could get.

The morning I started from the township, I intended to walk twenty-two miles to a sheep station on the road, and so to work southwards along the coast until I should get employment; but I had not gone five miles before I suddenly fell lame with a strange swelling on the ankle of my right foot. I could soon hardly crawl, and I had to make up my mind to rest at a corn and cotton plantation where I had worked for a short time, and the overseer of which I knew. Had it not been for my swollen ankle I should have passed the plantation, without going nearer

than the paddock fence. Now I had with me neither money nor provisions, but men often travel thus unprovided in the bush.

The overseer, who was a Scotchman, was very hospitable, examined my foot, told me to bandage it with wet rags, and gave me rations for a week, telling me that I must not attempt to walk before that time was over. I slept in one of the barns on the top of the ears of maize or Indian corn, which were piled four feet deep, and a bed of this kind is none of the softest, but I did not mind that.

On the last day of the week, when I was dolefully thinking of the tramping which had to begin again to-morrow, the overseer came to me as I was baking some bread in the ashes, and said, "Here's a letter for you Gregory, my man," for they used to call me Gregory when I was working there. Said I, "It can't be for me,—nobody knows my address." Said the overseer, "Oh yes, it's for you right enough, it came down from ——" mentioning a township and port about eighty miles distant, "and it's marked, immediate." The letter was from the merchant of whom I had spoken, stating that he had received a sum of money to pay my passage to England, and that if I went to an address which he gave me, at the place which I had just left, I should find a

horse to carry me.

Here was astounding news. The day before, nothing had been further from my thoughts than going to England. I had given up all idea of ever seeing my native land again, and I was getting used and hardened to the wretched life I was leading. There was a good deal of mystery about this letter and the way it had reached me, but I did not stop to think of that then. I think, at that moment, I could have almost appreciated the feelings of some poor creature reprieved from the gallows. Where was the tramping for to-morrow, now? It seemed to be ages away. No more tramping for me. No more hard work and hard fare. No more damp, and sickness, and peril. Yesterday, I had been miserable, disheartened, despairing; to-day, I felt as free as air, as light-hearted and joyous as a boy. 'Is it good news, Gregory?' said the kind-hearted overseer. 'I should think it was,' said I, 'I'm going to England.'

'And a good job too, Gregory, for I may tell you now, that if you had gone up into yon bush you'd just have died on the road; you're not fit for this country, that's the truth, and I wish you joy of leaving it.'

So I went off, after a kindly good bye, to get the horse that was promised me, and as I walked,

the whole thing had so taken me by surprise, that I felt half mad. I could by no means yet take it in, that my life of hardship was fading away from me.

In another week I was on board the steamer bound for Melbourne, at which place I was to get a ship for England. Of course, as my mother had actually sent the money, it would have been foolish of me not to have made use of it, and I hoped to be able to repay her soon when I got to England. The gentleman who wrote me the letter, had sent it to the plantation, as the last place at which I had been heard of. If it had not been for my bad foot, I should probably never have received the letter, as I might have vanished in the bush for months or years, if I had not justified the Scotchman's foreboding by dying there. Was there more than coincidence in this? I confess I am puzzled."

On another occasion, Gregory related to me an incident which occurred on board this steamer which took him down to Melbourne.

"There happened to be a very rough lot in the cabin, playing cards, drinking, and swearing. Now, although I was used to this kind of thing I kept out of the way as much as possible. Among these card-players, there was one middle-aged man who suffered from a dreadful cough.

He was bound, as he said, for Sydney, to try to get into an hospital there for disease of the heart. Between his paroxysms of coughing this man was just as excited, eager, and blasphemous as the rest.

Suddenly, after a worse fit of coughing than usual, he laid his elbows on the table and rested his head upon his arms. He remained thus until his turn came to play; his partner shouted to him, and the man sitting next nudged him in the ribs; but calling and nudging were alike thrown away, for the man was dead! They laid him out upon the floor, and sent a blackfellow who happened to be in the cabin, to fetch the doctor. The black accomplished his mission thus:—He found the doctor walking on the deck; he marched up to him grinning, ‘Whitefellow gone ‘bury,’ down below.’ Meanwhile, some convivial soul below with the dead man, made the following proposal:—‘Let’s see, mates, before the doctor comes, if he’s got the price of a nobbler about him, it’s no use to him now.’ No sooner said than done. The doctor certified the death. In half-an-hour the late card-player was thrown overboard, sewn up in a spare sail, after a hurried service. The skipper and doctor returned to their glass of grog; the man who had lost a partner chose a new one, ‘nobbler round’ were

purchased with the dead man's money, and soon the fun was fast and furious as ever."

Here is a text for the moralist—this is an extreme case—but is it not the way of the world? I think it would do a man good to put the case thus:—Suppose that some morning I am found dead in my bed, how would the society in which I live take the news; one or two persons would cry a little and make themselves ridiculous by putting on black clothes; people who never saw me or heard of me would gape and stare a little, and exclaim, how sudden! how awful! what a dreadful thing! Some people doubtless would think the matter rather a nuisance than otherwise. "It is so disagreeable having a corpse in the house!" In a day or two the poor worthless body which was once mine and of which I was proud and fond, shall be carried through the public streets with much pomp, and prancing, and black fringe and plumes, and a priest who never knew me shall call me brother and read empty* words over my carcase. Shovel down the earth and depart, the trappings of woe are put by to do honour to the next empty shell of humanity, and those of my friends who do not utterly forget that I ever existed are speedily consoled for their loss by thinking and talking of my numerous defects. And

* In one sense.

I, oh, mystery of mysteries, where am I? Some episode like this must assuredly happen in the life of each of us. Are we not the better of being reminded of it? ■

Are we to be told then that we are all hypocrites and worse? God forbid. That is far from being the lesson which the moralist would teach. He would rather say, "Let not the best of us learn to regard ourselves except as units, whom the multitude of our fellows will never miss when we are called away." It is right and just that it should be so, other people, and better people than we, spring up and take our places, and the world has no time to waste on mere personal regret. My friends, let us all learn and practise humility.

CHAPTER XI.

DURING the passage in the steamer Gregory picked up two acquaintances who were also bound for England, and the three agreed to go together. Both these acquaintances belonged to his own class, that is to say, they were men of education: one of them had been a contemporary of Gregory's at the university, and the other was one of those very few well-nurtured young men who have taken kindly to hard work and found that it agreed with them. This second was in consequence somewhat rougher in his ways than the other two, but had acquired far more experience. Gregory had met him before in the bush.

Neither of these friends, for they speedily became friends, had any superfluity of money, they had indeed hardly enough for the necessities of each.

When Gregory reached Melbourne, he found that after paying sixteen pounds for a steerage passage to England, and a week's board while waiting for the ship, he had about two pounds left to pay for his outfit and necessities for the voyage. Now

Gregory had no blankets, those that he had always carried with him in the bush having been thrown away as useless and worn out. The question therefore arose with him, after having purchased certain tin pots, a knife and fork, a mattress, &c., whether he should expend what money remained to him in buying blankets, or whether he should lay in a stock of tobacco and do without blankets, at last he decided for the tobacco.

Melbourne has been so often described that I shall not waste time in writing about it. A good many people are, however, I believe unaware, that as a city, Melbourne may be placed in the same rank as London or Paris, not only as regards size, but also taking into account beauty and convenience. I am inclined even to think that with regard to these latter advantages Melbourne has no rival in Europe. To the idle sight-seer, or the ardent admirer of the picturesque, such a statement will of course seem ridiculous, but to the true observer, who loves, not to dream over dead crumbling walls and battlements, but to study living humanity, its works and ways, the glories of Melbourne will be a more appreciable delight than the palaces of Venice, or the antique monstrosities and artistic beauties of Rome.

Gregory was confirmed in these views, which he held in common with me, when afterwards we had

the opportunity of comparing the two studies.

"I cannot understand," said Gregory, "how people can take so much delight in the monuments of the dead past, which rear themselves usually amidst a present almost as dead. It must be part, I suppose, of my physical composition, that I am quite unable to appreciate what other people so evidently delight in. Picture galleries, sculpture, palaces, temples, and sight-seeing generally, only weary me and dazzle my eyes. I carry away from the contemplation no available impression; it must require a special preparation or training, this sight seeing, I feel convinced. I cannot for the life of me, find any connection between the dead people and their works. It must be a fault of imagination or taste, or something, I suppose, that that art passion about which Thackeray and others are so eloquent, is to me a myth. I cannot even understand what kind of men those painters are—how does a man find it possible to go on working for months or years at his canvass, producing, it may be, things of genius and pathos, and then to part with this creation for ever? The painter sells his work for a sum of money, and the better it is, the less chance he has of ever seeing it again. Doubtless the painter must possess some faculty which recompenses him for this. Perhaps it is habit, as in the case

of the surgeon who becomes, as it were, callous in time, however much he may have shrunk at first at the sight of blood, at the idea of inflicting pain. The author, on the other hand, only lends to the public the offspring of his brain, he does not part with it for ever.

But leaving artists and authors out of the question, (continued Gregory,) it always seems to me a fearful waste of time and sympathy, that running about from tower to temple, from temple to church, from church to palace, that cackling over old pots, and pans, and broken idols. Most people who practise it do so, I think, merely for the purpose of having something to talk about. Shall we, I wonder, our works and ways, be some day or other, the food for the small talk of a later and wiser generation?"

Gregory found it no joke, I can tell you, going round Cape Horn without blankets, more especially as the ship was detained for three weeks, beating off and on the coast of New Zealand, by a furious easterly gale. Gregory and his friends were the only passengers, and so had plenty of room, and were very comfortable. My friends, if you ever want to go on a long voyage, take my advice and don't go by a regular passenger ship, but find a ship, which, in addition to her cargo, has just one or two spare berths. It is

always best for the traveller to avoid unnecessary contact with his fellows, more especially on board a ship, where the natural selfishness of human nature is always terribly apparent. But these three friends got on very comfortably together. They used to take the weeks, turn and turn about, for cooking and washing, and in the second week of the voyage, when Gregory chanced to be on duty, this happened.—

Gregory had made a pie for dinner, the materials for which he had stolen the day before. Don't start, this is nothing on board a ship. First of all he had stolen the flour from a cask which lay in an unsuspected corner on the lower deck, and he had also stolen a duck. The stealing of the duck, however, required accomplices. At a certain hour every morning the ducks used to be turned out on the poop deck to get such exercise as they could; and this fact suggested a plan to Gregory; he acquainted his friends, and the conspiracy was formed. Gregory waited in the cabin below near the open port. (This opening of the port was contrary to all orders, but as the ship heeled over much there was little danger.) Presently, as Gregory watched, a cord descended in front of the port; this, after some difficulty, he grasped. Now on the other end of this cord was a large and tempting crust,

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not too large for a duck to swallow. The two confederates above chose a time when nobody was looking, to throw this crust among the ducks—one of these eagerly swallowed it and ran off, when Gregory, feeling a steady pull, easily jerked him overboard, and hauled him in at the port with much quacking. That same evening "it came on to blow" terribly; however the pie was made and taken to the galley to be baked, and Gregory went to fetch it. Now it so chanced, that the steward was walking the deck at the time, and it was also just the time when the dinners were being served out for passengers and crew. It was "duff" day, and all the "duffs" were ranged along the deck waiting to be claimed. "Eight bells below there," (whieugh-eugh) "change the watch," but nobody was to have any dinner that day. The steward was very unpopular on board the ship, and the man at the wheel thought this a fine opportunity for playing him a trick. Now it is not very difficult for a skilful helmsman, if he so pleases, to give a man on the deck a slushing without doing any damage, but this man over-rated his own skill or powers; for, in letting the ship's head fall away a little so as to catch a few buckets of water, he lost all control over her; she lurched to, and received plump upon her deck a great mountain of green water.

Gregory saw it coming, and jumped into the rigging, but not in time to save the pie, for smash came the water with a great swelling, gurgling rush, and Gregory only held in his hand an empty tin pie dish, washed clean; to which, however, he stuck like a man. But this was not all, however. Away went the galley with all its hissing implements and embers—away went her coops, pigstye, pigs, cowhouse, cow, and bulwarks, in one common calamity. Luckily no one was in the galley, and the few men on deck all gained the rigging. The only remnant of that day's dinner was one solitary duff, which a sailor espied from the yard arm, floating quietly out to sea. He promptly let himself down a rope and secured it.

So the captain and officers had to do without fresh meat and milk for the rest of the voyage. In exchange for his duck pie, Gregory had to put up with a ducking; and for three days, there being no kitchen, the fare was very poor indeed. Gregory was afterwards relating this incident at a French dinner table; there was present a deaf old lady, who, hearing something about the sea and a cow, put the two together, "*Quoi?*" said she, "*c'etait une Vache de mer.*" "*Non, Madame,*" replied Gregory promptly, "*c'etait une mere de Vaches.*" At which *jeu de mot*, after

three quarters of an hour of explanation, the old lady was graciously pleased to smile.

It may possibly be objected that my hero has not shown very much dignity in thus fishing for ducks with a string, but Gregory was one of those men, who, however serious they may become, never grow old, and retain something of their boyish humour and sense of enjoyment to the last. Besides there is something in the idea of substituting duck pie for salted horse, otherwise corn beef, which would tempt many a graver man than he under the circumstances. Moreover I do not think much of that philosophy that would prefer a bad dinner to a good one, when a little ingenuity would mend the matter.

A little ingenuity, indeed! but the duck was stolen, and men have been hung or transported for stealing ducks before now! But in judging of the criminality of an act we should always take into account the circumstances under which it was committed: a hungry man steals a turnip from a field, and eats it, and he is clapped in gaol for a week; a frolicsome youth going home to dinner does the same, and the farmer bows to him and begs him to take another. We are all worshippers more or less of the golden calf respectability. However this has nothing to do with Gregory and his accomplices.

CHAPTER XII.

GREGORY landed in England in a very forlorn condition; indeed he had to beg for an old coat and a pair of boots from one of the sailors before he could go ashore at all. He found, however, a sum of money waiting for him, enough to enable himself to buy a decent suit of clothes and pay his fare home from London.

Everything seemed strange to Gregory, even as if he had landed in a foreign country. The pale delicate faces of the people, the distinction between classes, the civility, or, as it seemed, servility of the lower orders, and the arrogance of the higher. When the Count de Beauvoir went to Australia, about which country he has written a very interesting and amusing book, he seems to have been much struck by the independent ways of the working classes there.

A travelling Englishman making a 'vacation tour at the Antipodes' was struck with astonishment on hearing himself described as a 'man.' "I say, this *man* wants some one to carry his luggage," said

some one to whom he applied for help in transporting his impedimenta. This author, with praiseworthy irony, remarks that he expected some one to say, "this gentleman will carry your luggage for you." The fact is, that in the colonies, as everywhere else, you can get anything you like done by paying for it, only—the work is given in exchange for the money as a mere matter of barter, there is no more obligation on one side than the other.

But Gregory had no luggage, except a small tin box containing a rude set of chessmen, which he had cut out under some gum trees in the far away land.

"Where's Master Gregory's luggage?" exclaimed the faithful Deborah, on the morning after that prodigal's return, she and Mrs. Hawkshaw being engaged in the preparation of the fatted calf. Deborah evidently didn't understand it, and forgot that prodigals are seldom troubled with luggage. They leave that behind in the land where the swine are, and the husks, and the other disagreeable things and people.

As he was being carried home in the train, Gregory forgot that he was in England, and cheerfully addressed his companion in the carriage. The man shrunk into his corner with a grunt of dissatisfaction thoroughly English.

Now I am bound, being an Englishman, to be

patriotic and to stand up for my country, and to laud it on all occasions as the best in the world; but, as far as social intercourse goes, I am decidedly and intensely foreign in my sympathies. English snobs may laugh at foreign politeness, and compare it in a disparaging manner with the magnificent *sang-froid* of British snobdom; but as soon as ever the snob breaks out of bounds, and goes into 'foreign parts,' or 'on the Continent,' he is only too glad to adopt so much of the foreign manner as his nature is capable of acquiring. He is eager to make the acquaintance of the "natives of the country," but he seldom raises his hat when he addresses them. When the foreigner commits that act of politeness, the Briton mistakes it for a mark of deference towards the land of the free—and the snob. In every town on the Continent one may recognize an Englishman by these two characteristics: he turns round and stares at people, and he enters a shop with his hat on.

The Germans also have that habit of staring, but then one can also recognize a German by his sallow complexion, a certain peculiarity about his nose, and his wiry locks.

I pass over without comment the reception which Gregory met with, and the feelings with which he found himself at home again. Rather let us see the effect of these years of exile on the man

himself. He returned, then, at the age of twenty-six, with a constitution somewhat impaired, and a mind sadly deficient in serious convictions. He had, however, a certain shrewdness and knowledge of the world, and a thoughtful manner of talking matters quietly, which were in him the foundation of philosophy—that kind of philosophy which he afterwards defined as the art of taking things as they come. He was not himself aware, however, how wide a field his thoughts and speculations had carried him into, until he found how the calm religious tone of home jarred against his inner feelings. When he heard quoted, as certain, accomplished facts, beyond the possibility of doubt or argument, those very problems with which his thoughts had so often tormented themselves, it seemed wonderful to him to meet continually, and hold intercourse with, people who seemed to possess that certainty which was unattainable for himself, and his mother treated him just as if he possessed that certainty; how could she suppose that a son of hers had fallen away from the faith in which he had been brought up? and how could the son find the heart to undeceive her? It was a serious dilemma: he must either deceive his mother by pretending to be what he was not, or he must infinitely pain and shock her by telling her that he was not what she supposed him

to be. Several times, in conversation on miscellaneous subjects, he fell unconsciously on dangerous ground, and made statements which his mother characterized as 'loose,' and he was immediately obliged to retract or explain away what he had said.

He felt that there was a great and impassable gulf fixed between his mother and himself. Her thoughts were all heavenly, mystic; his all earthly, intellectual, sceptical. At this time he hardly knew whether he believed in a God or not; but he felt also, that if he accepted any part of his mother's religion he must accept it all as it stood. He had not yet arrived at any reservations or distinctions. Once the thought occurred to him, May not this religion be, after all, but a disease of the intellect? But he could not be satisfied with this solution, he had noticed and seen too many deep heart-yearnings and noble aspirations springing from that source. He went to listen to sermons, but they seemed to him words, mere words, without reason or conviction. His soul was dark within him, groping for some ray of light, only groping in the wrong direction.

When Gregory walked out, he was always meeting ghosts, yet he could not recognize them, and they passed by—people whom he had known before he left England, and whose faces he re-

membered, without being able to connect them with any palpable recollection. He often used to groan over this afterwards,—“It has been the misfortune of my life to be constantly becoming acquainted with people whom I could like very much, and then I have lost them, never to see them any more; or if I have by chance seen them, they have no longer been the same to me. It is only quite late in life that I have begun to form any solid friendships.” This, of course, was the natural result of his early folly, which made him for many years a vagabond.

The only occupation for which Gregory was in any way suited was teaching, and he soon succeeded in obtaining a mastership in a private school, at a small salary; in fact, he became what used to be called an usher.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE common-place town of Maidford is bounded on the south by the river Maid, which seems to have taken a curve at this point in order to avoid running through the town, the town having a much older air about it than the river. Higher up the river there is no other town of any importance, but as the river runs on, it passes through Brentwich, Greenford, Nantborough, and so into the sea by Cocklemouth.

The town on the west side melts and straggles off into the hop-fields. It is bounded on the east by the uplands where the market gardens and allotments are, and where stands the workhouse; and on the north by an ugly bleak range of low hills, topped by stunted pine woods. It is not a very lively town, but nevertheless being the native town of the Hawkshaws, it is my duty to describe it. It has perhaps twenty-five thousand inhabitants, of whom all who have any pretension to gentility live on the western or hop-field side. Nobody, that is nobody but small tradesmen and a sprinkling

of doctors, lives in the town itself, which is wholly given up to trade or business. It is the end and aim in life of Maidford tradesmen to put by enough money to enable them to build a villa or cottage among the hop-fields. Hence it may almost be said, that there are two towns, side by side; the one genteel, pretentious, cockneyfied. The other vulgar, narrow-streeted, noisy, dirty; and yet there is something picturesque about the business side of the town too, for many of the houses retain the old gable-ended, be-raftered, grey-slatted roofs, which our ancestors affected, and which we ourselves sometimes like to see in pictures.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, of course, lived on the hop-field side, but not in the most genteel quarter, inasmuch as the house stood just in that dubious region which was not beyond the oyster-shells and small miscellaneous shops and street-boys and costermongers. The Hawkshaws lived, in fact, in an extension of the main street of the town; further on one came to the real villa residences, as the road arrived at that point where it was no longer in danger of being called a street, and got out between real hedges with fields on each side, and turned and split into country lanes, where one came suddenly upon unexpected lodge-gates and pillars with balls on the top of them, and sometimes effigies of animals. Many of these villas

stood in their own grounds, that is, they were surrounded by extensive shrubberies, several hundred yards in circumference, hiding the flower gardens from the view of the inquisitive or admiring passer on the road. This individual, however, would have had an opportunity of seeing, on one December morning, two very pretty girls looking over the wall from one of these shrubberies, their gaze directed townwards. Leaning over the wall, with a back-ground of green shrubs, I think these two young ladies appeared to great advantage, but there was no one there to see. Evidently sisters, not because of their dress, but because in face, feature, and movement they were distinctly alike; so alike, that the relationship was visible at once. But what established it beyond a doubt was the identical hue and tint of their hair, which it would be wrong and unpolite to describe as red, but which was only saved from that stigma by its silkiness of texture, and the absence of that peculiar florid complexion of face which usually accompanies hair which is called red. Hair such as this is worn to the best advantage, I think, in the old-fashioned ringlets, as these young ladies wore it. Neither of them, perhaps, had any pretensions to be called handsome. They had that kind of sympathetic prettiness, which one comprehends at a glance, without attributing it to any special

regularity of features. One does not require to scan carefully such faces, one is rather inclined to think at once, those are pretty girls. Neither of them seemed to be more than twenty years of age, though indeed the elder was twenty-two, and the younger not quite twenty-one. Merry girls they seemed to be, as they gazed impatiently down the road, and chatted to one another.

"I say, Georgie, if she doesn't come soon, I shall vote for going in, my feet are cold."

"Yes, Ellie," said the other, getting up a pretty shiver, and drawing her shawl close round her shoulders; "but if she finds us gone, she won't know what to do with it, and then she's very likely to blurt out something. You know how unjesuitical she is."

"Un—how much?" replied the elder laughing. (Now the elder of these girls was called Georgina, and the younger Eleanor; they couldn't help it, they were christened so, but the names make very pretty abbreviations.)

"How stupid you are! I mean, of course, that she's just as likely to lug it all up the garden with her, and frighten mamma into a fit, or to begin talking about it, or something. Oh, here she is!"

The unjesuitical young lady appeared just turning the corner from the road. How shall I describe

her? In all respects she presented a marked contrast to her sisters. They were above the average height; she was short, but not dumpily so. Her sisters were only pretty—she was beautiful. The beauty of her features, and the exquisite grace of her figure, gave to her whole person an air of handsome demureness, which one was suddenly surprised to find metamorphosed into mirth, or even sauciness, when she smiled, or broke, as she did when first caught sight of, into a ringing laugh. And yet it was a face at which one had to look more than once, before one could comprehend its loveliness—the perfection of the lines and curves—the calm serenity of expression, which suggested a kind of conscious unconsciousness of beauty.

But I think the crowning marvel about her was her hair. She wore it falling in mass over her shoulders. It was fastened—I don't pretend to know how young ladies do fasten their hair so as to obtain that particular effect. But the colour! It was that kind of golden which reminds one of summer sands, of the sun shining on a hay-field in June—of anything, in fact, that fills our eyes with brightness and joy.

As she advanced, and espied her sisters, she burst into a laugh, as I have said, and waved over her head a large wooden cross, painted black.

"I've got it," she said, "but if you only knew what trouble I've had, and adventures; and, bye the bye, I looked in to see Mrs. Hawkshaw and 'the gyurls' (with a ludicrous mimicry of somebody), and their brother is come home for his holiday, or vacation, or something."

"Did you see him? what's he like?" asked both the others in the same breath.

"No, I did'nt; but do you know, that when Mrs. Hawkshaw saw this from the drawing-room window, she rushed out and exclaimed, 'Not into my house, Miss Bessy!' I thought she meant *me* at first. She would hardly consent to my leaving it in the tool-house while I went in, though nobody ever goes in there except the cats."

"Well, we must make haste in, Bessy! *Mamma* must be in an awful rage as it is. Let's hang it up on one of the laurels." So the cross was duly suspended, and the three girls went towards the house, laughing and chatting.

I confess that I am really delighted to have arrived at that point in my story where I can conveniently introduce young ladies into it, although I fear I have made a sad hash of my descriptions. I think that authors and readers would be saved a great deal of trouble if the custom were introduced of affixing to the title pages of novels portraits of the heroine, and, per-

haps, of the hero—but that is not so necessary, heroes are usually persons whose description may be dismissed with a scratch or two of the pen; but the heroine is a thing of details, of lights and shades, leaving out of the question hair-dressing and millinery. I have asked my wife to give me her opinion on those descriptions of young ladies which I hope you have just read, and she says they are shallow and incomplete, and convey no idea to her mind. “And,” said she, “you’ve said nothing about their dress.” “Good heavens, Maria!” said I, in answer to this, “do you suppose that when I took a fancy to you I cared about, or noticed, the dresses that you wore?” “Perhaps not,” said she, “but I never wore my hair hanging about my ears, or those nasty curls; and other authors—” “My dear Maria, I am firmly persuaded that those male authors who describe so minutely the dresses and outward decorations of ladies must keep a milliner in their pay; as for women, if they go out in society, all that they can remember or talk about afterwards is the dresses of the other women.”

About a year before Gregory’s return from abroad, a very peculiar family had come to settle in one of the Maidford Villas. No one knew whence they came, or why they came, but everyone was agreed that there was something very peculiar

about them. They seemed to have plenty of money, and lived in a good house, and therefore people called on them, and took a good deal of notice of them, especially as there were three pretty daughters, and this was what puzzled everybody, viz., that the daughters seemed to be altogether independent of their parents, and distinct from them in every particular. The father was, or professed to be, a religious fanatic; the mother was a fat vulgar woman of the Low Church persuasion; while the daughters were well educated, elegant, addicted to worldliness and High Church.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, as we know, visited nobody, and therefore she was surprised, when these people took the initiative and called on her.

When the servant Deborah gave her the cards and announced Mr. and Mrs. Longfield, a name hitherto unheard in Maidford, Mrs. Hawkshaw went into her little drawing-room, trying to think what these strangers could possibly want with her. It struck her however as possible that they might have some news to impart about Gregory. "Ah, how d'ye do," said Mr. Longfield, a thin black clothed individual, with a decided stoop in his shoulders, and a long face with a peaked chin. "How d'ye do? delighted to make your acquaintance, I'm sure. I've called because I understand you are a woman of experiences, and I hear have

had your troubles; let us compare notes. Allow me to introduce Mrs. Longfield, she also has had experiences, but not such as mine, oh dear no!" All this was said with the greatest volubility and self-complacency. Mrs. Longfield rose, gasped, shook hands with a muttered speech in which only the word "'ot," could be distinguished, and sat down again. Mrs. Hawkshaw did not feel sure whether these people were very pious, or very mad. However she said what was polite, and waited for further enlightenment.

Mr. Longfield was evidently equal to all the talking.

"And now," said he, "that we have made your acquaintance we must be great friends. These are the latter days." Mrs. Hawkshaw felt slightly edified, for she was a firm believer in Dr. Pourout, who had at that time made his first "appointment" for the dissolution of all things. We all know how many he has made since.

"These," continued the orator, "are the latter days, and all people of 'experiences' should be united, waiting to be caught up. Yes, (looking at the cornice of the ceiling,) you shall be caught up, I shall be caught up, and, doubtless my wife—who is not at present. You have daughters, I think?"

Mrs. Hawkshaw who began to be still more edified, ringing the bell, requested Deborah to

summon the young ladies.

These daughters of Mrs. Hawkshaw's who had the misfortune of being slightly satirical and of having a keen sense of the ludicrous, could not help glancing dubiously at one another, when they saw the company which their mamma was entertaining. They curtsied in the old-fashioned way, and sat down near the window.

"Young ladies," continued Mr. Longfield, "I have just been telling your dear mamma, that we shall shortly be 'caught up.' I'm looking for it every day myself."

Martha, the graver of the two sisters, looked at Mary, who was turning steadfastly towards the garden, and shaking slightly. This was infectious, and Martha also turned towards the garden.

"Yes, when the robe is ready and the mansion prepared I shall be caught up, perhaps to-morrow—who knows?"

Things were getting serious with the two girls, and it was only a question of time which should misbehave herself first, when kind chance sent relief in the person of a man with a harp, accompanied by two dogs.

"Do," said Mary, addressing her sister, "do look at those funny dogs." Then they both laughed and felt better.

"I don't see anything funny about them," said

Mrs. Hawkshaw, "I think you're rather silly."

The fat woman in the arm chair broke the silence that ensued.

"There'll be 'armony in 'Eaven, there are 'arps."

Here Martha, smitten by sudden generosity, rushed out of the room to give the poor man a penny. To Mary's infinite relief her mother called her over and whispered—

"Go and tell Martha on no account to waste a penny, let him have the beer that was put by for the dustmen." The man received the message, and went round to the back door nothing loath, and was presently seen and heard passing the drawing-room window, shaking his fist and cursing horribly. The fact was the faithful Deborah had mistaken the bottle and given the poor man a glass of vinegar, of which he had swallowed half.

"What an 'orrid man," said Mrs. Longfield. "I can't bear to go down the garden until he's got away—so ungrateful too—if you'd tried to poison him he couldn't have behaved worse."

"Those men are very ungrateful. It was only the other day that a beggar called here, and Deborah (my maid) gave him a basin of *most excellent* soup, and he had the impudence to ask what it was made of. And before Deborah could explain, he exclaimed rudely, "Keep your slops,"

and went off in a most *un-christian* frame of mind, I'm sure.—Well if you must go—I'm so glad to have seen you—good bye.”

Mrs. Hawhshaw, who had the defect of believing every one to be sincere, thought that her visitors were slightly eccentric, but worthy people, and rebuked her daughters severely when they began to talk “in a light way” about them.

“I think,” said Mrs. Hawkshaw, in conclusion, “that they are very excellent people, and I must beg you not to laugh at them. The levity of the young people of the present day is terrible.”

Old people usually talk in this strain to young people. Most of the people over fifty, with whom I am acquainted, must have been most exemplary children—often I can hardly fancy that they have been children at all. “When I was young, children were very differently treated.” “I never had any pocket money.” “I used to be pleased if my parents gave me the bacon rinds at breakfast, without asking for two slices every morning.” “I should have never dreamed of addressing my parents so!”

I suppose that people who talk thus, have actually brought themselves to believe that their childhood was the cold lifeless thing that they would fain have us believe that it was; and doubtless our own children will, some day, talk

in the same strain to our grandchildren when we ourselves are no more.

The next day Mrs. Hawkshaw's house was again invaded, this time by the three young ladies to whom I have already introduced you. Only a ceremonious visit, but that brightened up the little household wonderfully, leaving some incident to talk about. "You see," said Bessy, "we know that papa and mamma were here yesterday, by hearing them talk, but we don't belong to their set; and so they didn't bring us, but we like to make friends."

All this of course was highly irregular, but the Longfields were curious people. Mrs. Hawkshaw did not altogether agree with her daughters in liking these girls; she found them rather forward in their manners, and noticed that they wore crosses suspended at their throats. "In fact," said she, "I'm not sure whether or not they're desirable acquaintances for you."

However, gradually an intimacy sprung up between the young people, and Mrs. Hawkshaw could not find it in her heart at present to put any obstacle in the way.

How such parents as Mr. and Mrs. Longfield came to have three such daughters is a puzzle, physiological and moral. For one thing, the girls had passed the greater part of their lives among strangers at a boarding school, where, however,

they had evidently been carefully educated. When Bessy declared that they did not belong to the same set as their parents, she spoke undutifully, but spoke no more than the truth.

At present these young ladies were indebted to their parents only for the shelter of a roof. Each of them had a sum of money of her own, the interest of which was at her own disposal. In fact, though living in the same house with their father and mother, they were entirely independent in tastes, habits, and pursuits. Their parents made scarcely an effort to control them, so long as their doings were not personally offensive to themselves. Ellie, Georgie, and Bessy were free to occupy themselves with their own imaginings, and indeed were perfectly capable of taking care of themselves. Strange though it may seem, they soon managed to insinuate themselves into such society as Maidford afforded, and became so popular, that no party or social gathering was considered complete without them. They danced well, played well, sang lively songs, and were altogether an agreeable addition to the somewhat dull society of the town. People talked about them, of course, wanted to know who they were, and all about them, but in a good-natured way. Nothing wrong, at all events, was known against them; their parents were queer, never went out, but what of that?

They were freely criticised by the young ladies,

but on the other hand, the young men applauded and nicknamed them among themselves "The Three Graces."

The Three Graces all the time knew that they were talked about, and rather liked it than not; they soon heard of the nickname and took it quite in good part, and chaffed certain of their male acquaintances about it. But for all that, no word of wrong was ever whispered about them. They were regarded generally, as three frank engaging girls, fresh to the world and its ways, but with the misfortune of having queer parents. Having a great deal of leisure time on their hands, "the Three Graces" took to flirting and High Church for recreations. Not to that evanescent ball-room or conservatory flirtation, which seems to save ball or party from utter staleness or *ennui*, but to deep, downright killing work, where all the artillery is brought to bear day after day on the same unfortunate object, until the colours are obliged to strike.

Not that either of them had any idea of inflicting torture, only they had amused themselves in this way until they had grown callous, just as a fisherman gradually arrives at the comfortable conviction that fish and worms and other cold blooded creatures do not feel. They had come to regard men as cold-blooded animals, that was all.

CHAPTER XIV.

Two or three weeks after the first visit paid by Mr. and Mrs. Longfield to Mrs. Hawkshaw, Mr. Longfield came again, unaccompanied by his wife, and stayed nearly two hours, delaying the family dinner, which took place at one o'clock. Mary and Martha positively refused to see him, so their mother had to sustain the visit alone.

He began by offering to expound a chapter in the Bible, and did not give his hostess time to expostulate if she would, but rushed at once into dreary and preposterous discourse about the scarlet woman, with blasphemous distortions and misapplications of texts. Mrs. Hawkshaw listened wearily. She had too much good sense not to feel a little disgusted, but her good manners would not allow her to show her feelings. One o'clock struck, and her mind, punctual woman as she was, immediately flew away to the pots and pans. She pondered whether it would be advisable or possible to call it lunch, and ask the visitor to stop; but unfortunately the soup and mutton bone could not be

made presentable, and there was certainly not enough for four.

"As I was saying, Mrs. Hawkshaw, if you are attending to me, the scarlet woman, who is shortly to be overthrown, is typical of those abominations of crosses, and stoles, and altars, and idols, which, alas! are to be found everywhere in Christian communities. No matter, the stink of her burning shall shortly go up, and the faithful shall smell it and rejoice, and then we shall all be caught up,"—and so on into such blasphemy as I do not care to repeat.

Mrs. Hawkshaw could not help thinking that this last-recorded sentence might have been suggested by the smell of the dinner, which began at that point to pervade the little house. She was painfully conscious of it herself, and began to get also very weary of her visitor, of whom she could not get rid without downright incivility. She threw out several hints, which had no more effect on him than a boy's pea-shooter on the hide of a rhinoceros. She resolved, however, not to talk any more than she could help, and to allow him to exhaust himself. Mr. Longfield, however, seemed to see through and enjoy these tactics. He changed the subject.

"I came to speak to you this morning about my wife." He paused.

"Is she ill?" said Mrs. Hawkshaw.

"No, no, my friend, not ill; there is no carnal illness, but she has no experiences. I fear there is no mansion for her."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Hawkshaw, not knowing what else to say.

"Yes, I greatly fear that when I am caught up she will be left behind. 'One shall be taken and the other left.'"

Mrs. Hawkshaw could endure no more, and managed to get rid of this visitor by some excuse, she hardly knew what, of urgent household affairs.

At four o'clock on the same day Mrs. Longfield called without her husband. "What an extraordinary thing," said Mrs. Hawkshaw to her daughters. "I wonder why these people pitch upon me in this way." "Say you're not at home!" said downright Mary. "My dear, I'm ashamed of you; nothing justifies telling an untruth." "Say you're engaged," said Martha. "But I'm not engaged," said her mother. "Then I suppose," said Martha, "you must see her, only I hope she won't stay so long as her husband."

"I must ask you, Mary and Martha, to come in and help to sustain the conversation. I really don't feel equal to it all by myself."

"But, mamma," pleaded Mary, "she's such a ridiculous woman; I'm sure I shall laugh."

"I hope," said the mother, severely, "that no daughter of mine would ever be so ill-mannered and wicked as to laugh at her mother's guests."

"But she's not your guest, mamma, nobody asked her to come."

"Mary! don't be pert; you know what I mean. I expect you both to come in and behave yourselves properly."

All this while Mrs. Longfield was painfully ascending the garden steps. Martha whispered wickedly to her sister, "I think the only mansion she's fit for is a pig-stye; she's the fattest woman I ever saw. How she puffs!" So they went into the drawing-room not in a very serious frame of mind.

"Ow de doo, young ladies?" gasped Mrs. Longfield, "I've just been asking your dear ma where you worship."

Now there was nothing particularly laughable in this speech, but the girls were in that state which predisposes for the ridiculous. Mary took a chair hastily behind her mother, and Martha examined carefully the titles of the works in the rosewood bookcase.

Mrs. Hawkshaw glanced severely on her eldest daughter, and turned sweetly to Mrs. Longfield.

"We go to church together—to the parish church."

"Ah, do you now?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hawkshaw thoughtfully, "we go together to the parish church."

Mrs. Longfield gave utterance to a sound between a groan and a gasp. This was evidently not elicited by the conversation, but was merely a natural convulsion.

The girls, now, had out their pocket handkerchiefs.

"Did my husband come to see you this morning, Mrs. Hawkshaw?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hawkshaw, slightly embarrassed, not knowing what was coming; moreover, the behaviour of the girls made her feel fidgetty and uncomfortable.

"Oh, Mrs. 'Awkshaw, we've 'ad such a dreadful scene at 'ome. I was so glad that none of my gyurls was present. My 'usband be'aved hawful. It was all about an 'at and an 'atbox. Will you believe that a Christian would lose his temper about a nat?" If Mrs. Longfield had not been so intent on her story she might have heard very singular noises suggestive of suppressed laughter. Mrs. Hawkshaw heard it, and feeling behind her chair at random, encountered her daughter's arm, which she pinched severely.

"Oh, mamma!" shrieked Mary, partly with the pain, and partly glad of any excuse for uttering

an articulate sound.

"What is the matter, Mary?" said Martha, not daring, however, to look round.

"Oh, mamma did something so funny that I was obliged to laugh." Then they both laughed together, and felt equal to being more serious—but they were mistaken.

"Unmannerly girls!" whispered the mother with an angry look. (I don't blame the girls myself; I only wonder how it is that old people acquire the knack of keeping their countenances at all times.)

All this passed in three minutes, and Mrs. Longfield, suspecting nothing, continued her story.

"My 'usband has a nat that he bought when he was in foreign parts, and the other day he asked me to ride in the carriage and take it to the 'atter's, to be smoothed. It was in a natbox, with my 'usband's name wrote on it in brass. This morning, the 'atter's youngman brought 'ome the 'atbox, and when my 'usband hopened it he said, 'That's not my 'at—the 'atbox is mine, but not the 'at. My 'at,' says he, 'is a peculiar 'at. How dare you, sir,' says he, 'bring me an 'at which is not my 'at? Do you want to insult me about the 'at?' My 'usband is a very violent man when 'e's put out, and 'e takes the 'atter's young man by the shoulders and shoves 'im out,

crying murder, and throws the 'at after 'im; and then he begins upon me, and throws the 'atbox at my 'ead, and—I think I must ask those young ladies to leave the room."

"I'm very sorry that my daughters should—" began Mrs. Hawkshaw.

"That's just what I was thinking," said innocent Mrs. Longfield; "there are things I should like to tell you, which it's as well they shouldn't hear. They'll excuse me, I'm sure."—But the girls had already taken the hint, and departed to have their laugh out; and Mrs. Longfield appeared none the wiser.

Then she began to the astonished and bewildered Mrs. Hawkshaw a long account of her "usband's" misdeeds and infidelities. She was evidently in earnest, and at last, poor, vulgar thing, she began to cry.

"Oh, Mrs. 'Awkshaw, if you only knew 'ow wretched I feel." Then Mrs. Hawkshaw began to comfort her, and got her simple restoratives, and sent her away with red eyes.

Mrs. Hawkshaw was troubled with two or three more conjugal confidences of this kind—both parties coming to her with their own stories—until she got heartily tired even of their names. The whole affair culminated at last in that famous divorce case, Longfield *versus* Longfield, the queen's

proctor intervening; and the newspapers were full of all the revolting particulars, to the great scandal and amusement of the public. Why the queen's proctor should intervene or meddle with any such matters, I never could understand. Mrs. Longfield, however, got her divorce and separate maintenance, and her 'usband' disappeared from Maidford, and from our story.

After this, Mrs. Hawkshaw positively forbade her daughters to have anything to do with the Three Graces, "those horrid girls," as she called them; but for once Mary and Martha plucked up spirit and rebelled, and the mother gave in, and was miserable—all her children seemed to be so falling away from her, and running after strange inventions.

So when Gregory came home his sisters had made some new acquaintances, although he did not see them until he came home from his school to pass the Christmas holidays.

* * * * *

The Three Graces walked up the garden, laughing and talking, and Bessy related how she had met the Low Church rector of St. Mark's, who had scowled upon the cross which she carried, and had detained her ten minutes, while he delivered a lecture to her with his eyes shut. This young lady was a capital mimic.

After lunch, the girls, who had endured a good scolding for being late, set to work upon some decorations—of which this cross, flower covered, was to be a part—for the approaching Christmas services.

The most amazing thing of which I have to record in this chapter, is that the "Three Graces" not only managed to go "into society" themselves, but to get Mary and Martha Hawkshaw invited too; and more than that, they succeeded in a manner in persuading Mrs. Hawkshaw to let her daughters go out. And these girls, being both of them well-informed, sensible, and good-looking, were not at all loath to go out and be admired and talked to like other young ladies, though they were put to sad straits about their dresses and adornments. In fact, the Three Graces created a new era in Maidford.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE were three distinct 'sets' or grades of society in Maidford, which seldom amalgamated, although one occasionally met the same people on terms of greater or less intimacy with all. There were first of all, two great county families, who had "festivities," and invited distinguished guests from other parts thereto; there were secondly, the true aristocracy of Maidford, consisting of some few retired officers, the lawyers and bankers of the town, who were thought very highly of in Maidford, I assure you, as representing the moneyed interest, and the clergy, that is, the superior resident clergy who had houses and lands and benefices and took tithes. The curates, the normal or inferior clergy, were received as it were on sufferance, and in right of their orders, for no dinner party was held to be as it ought to be in Maidford without a clergyman to say grace.

There was yet another set in Maidford, which one might call the serious set, consisting chiefly of

single females and religious families and households of the Low Church and dissenting connection.

Time had been when this set had been very strong in Maidford, but at the time of our story, a reaction had set in, and real society in Maidford had found out that the only road to salvation passed as it were through a grove of masses, hallowed by incense, and sprinkled with holy water by priests in sacrificial garments.

In religious matters now-a-days fashion is everything, especially with the ladies. Ladies in society dare no more be unfashionable in their religion than they dare be in their head-dress, and they would be just as much inclined to suffer persecution for the one as for the other. Were Judaism to become fashionable, the passover would immediately be a sacred institution among us, and the fashionable bakers would drive a thriving trade in unleavened bread during the feast time.

There was in Maidford always some controversial point which occupied public attention and the pulpits. It happened at this time to be the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, lately imported by the incumbent of the new church of St. John the Baptist, a church which, originally built to afford accommodation absolutely needed by the lower classes, had gradually become a fashionable Sunday resort, out of which the sinners in fustian and

cotton, had been ousted by the aristocratic offenders in broad-cloth and satin.

Viewed philosophically, or cynically, this "baptismal regeneration" is a very curious dogma or doctrine. A comfortable doctrine, my brethren, fellow sinners, fellow travellers through this weary world—a few words carelessly uttered, a few drops of water carelessly sprinkled, and we are once and for ever ensured against the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The vanities of the one cannot harm us, we may walk among them, and take our part in them unscathed, unspotted. The works of the flesh shall turn to our advantage, and the devil is disarmed, he cannot hurt us.

Such was the doctrine held and pretty well carried out by the High Church set in Maidford. The Low Church people on the other hand held that the sign of the cross which the minister makes on the infant's forehead, has no more meaning than the label on a bottle of pickles, placed there so that every one may know that they are pickles, and that the actual ceremony does not any more affect the child's interior, than the label does the contents of the bottle.

This pretty little controversy raged for a considerable time, and many hard words were said, and many personal enmities were formed, until "women's rights" came in to occupy public

attention, and Maidford was divided into two camps about that.

But we must not meddle with too many subjects at once, and at present we are occupied with Maidford society. The best way will be, perhaps, to sketch slightly the leading characteristics of five or six households and leading individuals.

First on my list come the two Sanderson families. These two families, though they visited as connections ought, did not belong altogether to the same set. They belonged to the great banking firm of Sanderson, Sanderson, Cook and Spencer. Cook and Spencer, however, were in the London agency branch, and many people believed Spencer to be a myth altogether.

No. 1. Mr. James Sanderson, bald, business-like, married, three daughters, two sons helping in the bank. Daughters High Church, and fond of dancing; sons fond of dancing, but "indifferent." Wife hospitable and fond of company. Four business dinners a year. Numerous evening parties. One ball.

No. 2. Mr. Edwin Sanderson, brother of the above, business-like, but not bald, serious, widower, a serious aunt, family of seven, four boys, three girls, youngest four years. Four business dinners in the year. Dancing not approved of, but allowed under restrictions. Tea parties, with amusing and

instructive games. No ball. Parish Church at least twice on Sunday, Sabbath Day reading, and all the newspapers put away.

No. 3. Major Blythe, old Indian, married, pretty wife, young family. Church on Sunday for the sake of respectability. No religious views. Sunday a day of enjoyment.

No. 4. Colonel Whitethorpe, another old Indian, bachelor, very fond of children, supposed to be an infidel. Good to the poor people.

No. 5. Parish Rector, tall, "fair round stomach." Rich in money and expectations. Preaches with his eyes shut, abhors the cross, reads the exhortation as if he were proud of it as his own composition. Comfortable household, but serious. Wife old and infirm. Family grown up and provided for.

No. 6. Perpetual Curate of St. John the Baptist, tall, awkward, unmarried. Enthusiast—much run after by the ladies.

Such were some of the principal types of society in Maidford.

Gregory had not been at home very long before he made the acquaintance of "the Three Graces."

"Will you come for a walk with us, Gregory," said Martha to her brother one morning, "we're going to carry something to that poor old man with the toothache." Now Gregory was occupied

that morning, in writing something which he fancied he might get inserted in some magazine.

"I don't think I can, Martha, I've got some writing I want to finish."

"Oh," said Mary, "any time will do for that stupid writing, you're certain not to get it taken."

"How do you know that?" said Gregory in a vexed tone.

"Why, of course not," said his sister, "there are plenty of people who can write much better than you can."

Aspiring young men have often to put up with remarks of this kind from their relations. A man's sisters and brothers, and cousins, are about the last people to give him credit for any literary ability he may possess. Is it familiarity, or what, which breeds this contempt? It was, however, always Gregory's ambition to be a literary man.

Then his mother even joined in against him. "Put away that rubbish, Gregory, and go with your sisters, they ought not to have to go out by themselves, now you are at home."

So Gregory put away his rubbish, with a sigh and an aggrieved feeling, and went with his sisters.

It was one of those winter days, rare enough in England, when the sun shines without creating or illuminating puddles in the road, the air was clear and frosty.

On their way they had to pass by the gate of Oriel Villa, where lived the Longfields, and as they were passing they were aware of ladies' voices on the other side of the wall.

"Just the very people we wanted," said Ellie, looking down on them. "Come up here all of you, and help us, and give us your opinion." These pious young ladies were such devotees that they risked catching severe colds by making church decorations in a damp shrubbery, for Mrs. Longfield would allow in her house nothing that savoured, as she said, of Popery.

"If ma were a Mahomedan," said Bessy once, "she could'n't hate the Cross worse than she does."

"We can't come up," said Martha, "we've got to carry *this* to old Maunderer at the turnpike."

"But it won't take three of you to carry that, surely," said Bessy, who had joined the conversation; "you come up, Mary, and bring your brother with you. By-the-by, I hav'nt been introduced, and Martha can go on to the turnpike, and join us coming back."

"If you like," said Gregory, "I'll go on to the turnpike."

"No! no! Mr. Hawkshaw, we want you to help us up here." So Gregory found himself introduced to these young ladies without any formal words, and Martha went on to the turnpike.

Mary and Gregory turned back to the gate, and mounting two or three steps entered the shrubbery.

"The Three Graces" were at work by the side of a great pile of evergreens—holly, laurel, and yew. Near this was a smaller heap of Christmas roses, and on a garden chair near lay a quantity of cotton-wool, and the materials for making banners and inscriptions. The visitors were allowed to spend a little time in admiring the various crosses, wreaths, and triangles, either already made or in course of preparation. "Now that you have seen all," said Georgie, "you must set to work; we didn't ask you here to be idle. Here Mary, here's lots of wool; you can go on with those letters, and if you don't mind, Mr. Hawkshaw, you shall break off some of those yew branches for me. Men are so nice and strong. We must get you to help us very often."

I think myself that there is nothing more pleasant than the confident familiarity of innocent, well-bred young ladies, but Gregory thought the whole thing rather a bore; however there was no escape, so he broke off and offered to the young lady who was at that moment busy inspecting something on the ground, a branch of yew almost big enough to have overshadowed a church.

"Good gracious me," said Georgie, "I had no idea you were so strong as that, but I see you

want instruction. I want these little dark twigs so, and so, and so." Gregory thus instructed, began again, the young lady busy all the time, working at a mystic device of two triangles, twisting the twigs in and out, almost faster than Gregory could pull them, and talking all the time, asking questions about New Zealand, to which she received very short and uninteresting replies, for Gregory was not then in the humour for talking, but Georgie prattled on all the same. Many men would have thought themselves superlatively happy in having a pretty girl to take so much interest in what they might say, and would have entered into the spirit of the thing, and enjoyed it; but Gregory was not used to young ladies' society, and did not care about it. Meanwhile the others worked and talked also over their various occupations. Bessie and Ellie seemed too intent on their work to take much notice of Gregory, though a keen observer might have detected them watching him with evident amusement.

When Martha returned from her charitable errand, she also joined the party for a little while, and then the brother and sisters had to go home to be in time for the noonday meal.

Gregory looked on in dignified silence while the girls kissed one another, and then the Three Graces shook hands with him, and hoped he would come

to help them again, "And," said Georgie, "thank you very much for your help, Mr. Hawkshaw, and for the interesting things you have told me."

Gregory fancied there was a slight tone of satire in this concluding remark—perhaps there was.

On their way home they fell to conversing about the Miss Longfields.

"Arn't they nice girls, Gregory?"

"Yes," said Gregory, "I suppose so."

"Which did you like best?" said Martha.

"I didn't take particular notice," said Gregory.

Martha persevered, "Georgie, the one you were talking to, is very nice."

"She talked too much for me," said Gregory sententiously.

"But I like Bessy the best, the girl with the lovely hair."

"Which she wears all down her back like a horse's tail," said Gregory.

"Gregory don't be rude."

As the Three Graces packed up their work, to be deposited in a garden shed, they talked Gregory over.

"What do you think of him?" said Bessy.

"I think he's a calf, dear, there's not much fun to be got out of him, I'm thinking."

"For shame, Georgie, do you know I rather like him, he's so natural."

"But then," said Ellie, "he's so clumsy."

"No one could certainly accuse him of being talkative," said Georgie, in a somewhat scornful tone.

"At all events," said Bessy rather sharply, "he doesn't talk incessantly, like Mr. Burkesby, nor nonsense like Ellie's pet parson." Now Mr. Burkesby, was the Low Church curate, and the pet parson was the curate of the opposite persuasion.

"Well, say what you like about him, Bessy, but remember I mustn't be interfered with until I have had my turn."

"I think if you don't manage better than you did to day—"

"If you say much more, I shall begin to think you are—"

"What?" said Bessy in a tone of half defiance.

"Only jealous, my dear."

It was the custom of these three sisters to joke one another in this way, but somehow to-day, one might almost have detected a quarrelsome tone, which was very unusual with them. The fact was, that Georgie was rather disgusted with her ill success; and Bessy, the beauty—well perhaps she had eaten something that had disagreed with her—so they went in to lunch.

A week afterwards, it was time to carry all

the decorations to the Church, and set them in their places, and Gregory was pressed into the service, his sister Martha accompanying him. Gregory did not like it at all, but did not see his way clear to escape. Certainly there was one way, and that was to give his mother a hint of what was going on; for this participation in the abominations of High Church on the part of her daughters, was as yet unsuspected by Mrs. Hawkshaw. But Gregory, could not descend to such a mean expedient as this.

He was, as before, the chosen cavalier of Georgie, who sent him on errands, made him ascend ladders, or hold them steady, drive in nails, or hold nails with his fingers while she herself drove them in.

It must be confessed that Gregory was very clumsy and stupid at this kind of work, and indeed would have much preferred his old work of splitting logs, which required nothing but downright strength.

Young ladies take a kind of malicious pleasure in entrapping men in this way, in setting them tasks, over which they are sure to bungle, and then in laughing at their awkwardness. But some men have the happy knack, which Gregory had not, of concealing or glossing over their awkwardness, and of making rather a merit of it.

In dealing with such men, young ladies are

forced to change their tactics. Gregory still remained proof against all Georgie's blandishments. It was not that he made any effort to resist them, but that he was utterly impassible, and, as far as the tender passion was concerned, a heretic.

At this time he did not take much care to conceal his opinions on the subject.

"I suppose," said Gregory, in conversation with Colonel Whitethorpe, "that I am differently constituted from other people," for I cannot understand or appreciate sentiment. Love and passion, and billing and cooing only exist for me in novels. I never knew anybody that was in love, and I am certain that the thing will never happen to me.—Pshaw, the thing is a myth."

"But you cannot call marriage a myth?" said the colonel, much amused at the young man's evident inexperience; for the colonel was one of the few people who understood Gregory, and who appreciated the mixture that was in him of shrewdness and simplicity.

"I scarcely believe in love marriages," said Gregory, "but anyhow marriage is and will remain a myth for me."

"Don't be too sure of that, Gregory, your time will come as well as another man's."

"And how is it your time never came?" said Gregory.

The colonel changed his tone directly, and drew himself up slightly.

"My time did come once," said he.

Gregory was silent, for he saw that his old friend was suffering from some emotion.

"Yes," continued the colonel, almost as if he was speaking to himself, "it comes to all of us, for good or evil. To some it brings happiness, and joy, and little children; to others—But," breaking off abruptly, "excuse me, you have carried me back thirty years into the past, and I may tell you a story some day."

But I am forgetting that Gregory is not yet acquainted with the colonel.

Colonel Whitethorpe was a tall handsome man of soldierly bearing and demeanour. His age would have been guessed as under five and forty, whereas he was ten years older than that. His was one of those faces that never look old, however white and frosted the surroundings; a high forehead, smooth yet pensive, grey, truthful eyes, a straight nose and kindly mouth and chin. One of those men that children and dogs fall in love with directly, and with whom they think (children and dogs too) that they may take all imaginable liberties. His pockets must have been as sticky as those of any school-boy—they were always full of sweetmeats and bon-bons. After his passion

for children, came his favourite recreation, which was fishing. He was the best fisherman that I ever knew: Gregory was a good one, too, but he was careless and always smashing and losing his tackle; he used to say that it was his luck, but I am sure that it was his constitution. The colonel, however, was methodical in everything, would walk a mile round by the bridge to recover a fly or collar lost in an alder or thorn bush, whereas Gregory would have recourse to his fly-book instantly, and leave the delicate gut to draggle in the stream. Moreover, while Gregory was a fisherman, that is, before he got married, he was dreadfully impulsive. If his line fell across a branch or a stump, he was in such a hurry to clear it that he was sure to fix it firm and fast; whereas the colonel, under such circumstances, would wait calmly, until the line had settled naturally and quietly, and then with a delicate, skilful movement he would lift it clear. Perhaps, in open water, the two were very nearly equal; but what fisherman is there who can always get open water to fish in. These small dexterities are the things that constitute the really good fisherman.

The only time when the colonel felt annoyed by children's society was when he was fishing, and indeed a good fisherman is rarely sociable while he is out, and there is a chance of catching fish.

I speak of trout-fishing, of which there was plenty in the neighbourhood of Maidford. As to other kinds of fishing—let those be enthusiastic about them who like, and practise them—always, winter and summer, the colonel's hat was garnished with flies and gut, the fisherman's insignia, for when he was not fishing he was usually occupied about fishing, making flies and arranging casts; now Gregory bought his flies, having no more idea of making a fly than of flying.

Gregory made the colonel's acquaintance in this way. He also was very fond of children, and children were fond of him, and one day he was taking a solitary walk, and happened to espy a white-headed curly urchin, making advances of friendship towards a large half-bred greyhound. Suddenly the dog turned with a prolonged yelp upon the child, and snapped at its chubby face. The child fell back, screaming with the shock.

Gregory had no stick, but rushed at the dog, gave it a huge kick in the ribs, and as it ran off snarling, threw his hat at it, as the only available missile.

Then he picked up the child which had been slightly scratched on the face, set it toddling on its legs, and led it to the cottage door hard by, saying such comforting words as he could, and accompanying them with a bright shilling. Pre-

sently the child left off crying and looked up at Gregory, wondering.

A tall gentleman who was passing lifted his hat, "I wish I had been near that dog with my stick, I would have killed the brute."

Then he felt in his pocket and produced his handkerchief and a packet of sweets. With the handkerchief he wiped the face of the child, who began to cry afresh at sight of the blood, and "Don't cry," my little man, said the colonel, "here's something nice." Then the mother came out curtseying.

"Thank the gentlemen, Johnny." But Johnny was shy and concealed his gratitude, if he had any; probably his mind was still occupied with the fright and the dog.

The colonel went and picked up Gregory's hat, which our hero had quite forgotten.

Then, as their way lay together, the two men, the old soldier and the young booby, (for Gregory was as yet but a booby), fell to talking about children and fishing; and before they parted, an acquaintance was formed, which was destined to have a great influence on Gregory's character and fate.

"Come to my house this evening, and smoke a pipe," said the colonel in parting, and Gregory promised to come.

When I read this part to my wife, she interrupted me.—

“You’re always describing people, George, and yet you have never described your hero.”

“I don’t mean to,” said I shortly, for I hate this sort of interference.

“Why not?” said my wife.

“Because if people can’t form an impersonation of him from his character, my labour will be thrown away.”

“There’s one other thing,” said my wife timidly.

“What thing?”

“Why, I *do* think that your remarks about religion are a little too—too irreverent; people will think that you want only to laugh at religion.”

“My dear Maria, can’t you see that it is not religion which I want to laugh at or caricature, but the people who make a stalking-horse of it; who profess one thing and do another; who profess to hold that there is but one God, and yet allow that there are many opposite methods of pleasing Him, unless they are uncharitable enough to condemn their neighbours, like Mrs. Hawkshaw.”

“I don’t understand that character of Mrs. Hawkshaw. A little way back you sneered at her for believing everybody to be sincere.”

“The character of women, Maria,” I began, “is made up of inconsistencies.” This was tanta-

mount to closing the conversation; and I gained my object, for my wife went hastily upstairs, as she said, to see if baby was crying.

CHAPTER XVI.

I THINK if there is one capacity for the retention of which those who have it should pray, it is the capacity of loving and being loved by little children. To be fond of children, to study and enjoy their ways and habits, is certainly one of the very few pure pleasures which are allowed to men on this earth, simply because the love of children can spring only from the purest motives. We love children for their simplicity, their purity, their trustfulness, and their truthfulness.

First of all for their simplicity—

I often long to be able to comprehend exactly a child's ideas about heaven or death. We who have grown sordid, and soiled, and careworn, who have entered deep into the struggle which the child has not yet begun, who look about us and notice the differing characteristics, the opposing temperaments, the jarring discords among our fellow-men, how can we form any idea at all of that heaven which is to reconcile these conflicting elements, which is to be a haven of rest and glory for all of us

that are good enough to reach it, rich and poor together.

But in the child's mind there can be nothing of all this. Heaven must seem to the child, simply a place of God's providing, where everything shall be somehow arranged for the greatest happiness of the inmates.

When children are unhappily brought in contact with death, how easily are they persuaded that all is for the best! that the loved one is only gone away into a far happier place than this earth, there to be rejoined hereafter. This simplicity of belief, this readiness to be consoled, is indeed one of the great charms of childhood.

It is, I fear, impossible for many of us to realize that we were once like that. The maze by which we are surrounded, of doubts mayhap, or of fears, of wild conjectures, has strengthened with our strength, and grown with our growth. The distance between the man and the child in point of simplicity is so enormous, that the man regards the child vaguely, as a thing wonderfully beautiful. And I think a man who takes the trouble thus to regard, finds himself unwittingly lapsing into a sort of yearning imitation of the child life. He can for a time become again a child in the company of children. He can, while they are present, almost feel and think like them, but alas only for a time.

He cannot, strive how he may, carry more than the remembrance of those moments away with him into the world of men and women, but that remembrance will undoubtedly do him good, and cheer him on his way.

We love children for their purity.

There is in fondness for children an indescribable something which charms the spirit, just as the sight of the calm beauties of nature charms—just as all really pure scenes delight our senses. Men cover up the beauties of nature with huge walls and works, and shut out God's day with a great pall of smoke, and the scene no longer charms. But the child is as fresh from the hand of God, as the flowers and the trees. It is only by comparison with the towns that we love to look upon the country; so it is only by comparison with ourselves that we love children. The motives of children are usually pure, that is, natural; our own are impure, that is, unnatural. The germs of impurity may be in the child, just as the germs of decay are in all visible nature, but we see them neither in the one case nor in the other. It is a morbid kind of philosophy which sees in the green leaves in spring-time the image of the fallen, trodden, decaying foliage in autumn, and so, in spite of original sin, we continue to love children for their purity.

We like children for their trustfulness.

They can have no fear of the hardness of life or the treachery of individuals, because they have no experience. A father may hold his child in one hand over his head, or twist it in the air, and the child only crows and chuckles with delight. It has no idea of cruel falls or brittle bones. An injury is to a child purely an accident, and soon forgotten. There is no proverb with less truth in it than that one "a burnt child fears the fire." It presupposes the existence in the child of the cunning and caution of the man.

The child is ready at all times to accept and believe an assurance of safety. It has, as it were, an instructive consciousness of its own helplessness, and full confidence in the superior strength and sagacity of its elders. This is especially the characteristic of childhood which we are invited to imitate in the Gospel, and herein lies the inferiority of reason to instinct. It is instinct which teaches the child to trust in some power stronger than its own. It is reason which impels the man to trust himself only as far as he thinks he can guide his own steps.

It is difficult for a man to put reason so far in abeyance as to trust himself implicitly to the guidance and care of a higher power, without attempting to question motives, to find a why and

a wherefore for everything that happens around him. It is rarely a sufficient answer for the man, that such is God's will.

We love children for their truthfulness.

Children have no necessity for telling lies, or for concealing the truth. Their wants are all provided without any care on their part. Hence this is rather a negative than a positive beauty in the child.

But it is none the less a beauty and an enviable possession. How many of us yearn after truth, and find it impossible of attainment. The necessity of living, of gaining our daily bread, involves with most of us the departure from truth. We must tell lies or starve. Those of us who have not actually to earn our living by the sweat of our brow, have other objects of ambition, in the prosecution of which strict truth is often impossible. There is no vice for which men have invented so many euphemisms as for this one of lying. In society, pretext, excuse, evasion, statement, are all words which express lying. In political life, we find diplomacy, the very perfection of lying, "orders in falsehood executed on the shortest notice, with promptitude and despatch." In trade, "speculation," "transaction," are the proper words.

All this is very disagreeable, but unless we appreciate it, we must fail to realize the truthfulness

of the child life; and it is only on that account that we allude to such a subject.

It is a curious thing that people who dislike children do so on the very same grounds on which others are fond of them.

For their trustfulness, which is always getting them into mischief, and involves supervision and trouble.

For their simplicity, which involves constant instruction and annoyance.

For their purity, which makes an unfavourable contrast with their own lives.

And for their truthfulness. Children are always blurting out the truth at inconvenient times, and have not yet found out that truth is the last thing that should be allowed to interfere with expediency.

But, leaving this cynical tone, which is but little adapted to the matter in hand, there is in this fondness for children a kind of awakening power, a softening influence, which cannot but help a man to resist the tendency to callous calculation which is him. It is only in the company of children that a man can unbend and become really natural. All the stern lessons of the world for the time are forgotten, the workings and yearnings of the intellect are laid aside, and the child, for awhile, becomes the teacher of the man. It is something

for a man to abhor for awhile all impurity: this power has he who is fond of children.

It is something to listen to the accents of truth and simplicity from lisping lips, to listen to merry laughter—the real child laughter, which is all physical enjoyment—to feel that one is really aiding and influencing that enjoyment, and that for once one is being really trusted and believed in.

I honour and like Colonel Whitethorpe in that he was fond of children and young people; and I know that in that fondness, and the practices that sprang from it, he found much consolation and unselfish pleasure. It was not only the children who were fond of him, but all young people—they came to him in their troubles and pleasures for consolation and sympathy, and he gave it to them out of his store of wisdom and experience; and was, I believe, partly reconciled to his own fate, in that he could never have children of his own.

It was pleasant to see and know how all the boys and girls in Maidford came frankly to the colonel, laying aside all their arts, and airs, and graces, such of them as were old enough to have them. He was the confidant and adviser in many a love affair. Georgie, Ellie, and Bessy regarded him as a kind of lay father confessor, although

they did not go often to him to confession; but they always spoke and thought of him with affection, and laid aside, in his presence, all their coquettish ways. Young people had an instinctive feeling that the colonel understood their characters, and was not to be taken in; and indeed they were not far wrong.

CHAPTER XVII.

Two days before Christmas Eve, Mary Hawkshaw received a note, inviting herself, her sister, and brother to a party at the house of Mr. Edwin Sanderson. "We hear," said Mrs. Sanderson's sister, the writer of the note, "that your brother is at home, and *if you can manage to bring him*, we shall be very happy to make his acquaintance."

"What does she want of me," growled Gregory, when this note was shown to him; "she writes about me as if I was a wild beast."

Now the fact was, that people in Maidford had talked Gregory over many times, and had agreed that he was "rather wild, my dear." "Given his mother a great deal of trouble," and so on.

The invitation was Bessy's doing, though what particular machinery she had brought to bear, in order to effect it, I cannot say.

"You two girls can do very well without me," said Gregory.

"No, we can't," said Martha, "it is so nice to have a gentleman with us."

By constant pressure Gregory was vanquished, and carried off in the close fly with his sisters when the evening came.

"How you smell of tobacco, Gregory," said Martha. "My dress will smell horridly when I get into the room."

"Why did you bring me then. I didn't want to come."

"I declare, if I'd thought of it," said Mary, in a pet, "I wouldn't have troubled you."

"There's plenty of time now, if you like to put me down. I'll walk back."

"Don't be ridiculous, Gregory. Of course it's too late now."

Gregory did not feel at all at his ease at this party. There was nobody there whom he knew. There were about a dozen other young men there, some of whom seemed to know everybody, and occupied themselves in turning over books for the ladies, and in small talk. The rest were grouped together talking and laughing. It was a party convoked for what Miss Jemima Sanderson called rational amusement. First of all there was playing and singing, and afterwards there were to be games.

The Longfield girls were not there. Evening parties, even of the chilliest kind, on Christmas Eve, being esteemed a profane thing by the devo-

tees of High Church. To-morrow was to be their great day; whereas in this Sanderson household Christmas Day was kept as a sort of extra sabbath, on which merriment was forbidden, as on the actual and hebdomadal Sunday. Gregory sat by himself behind a fat lady, drumming his leg on the floor. One of his sisters came up to him.

"Gregory, why don't you talk to somebody?"

"Who am I to talk to?" said Gregory.

And indeed to whom was he to talk. There was nothing in common between himself and those people; he felt himself somehow coarse and common with his large red hands, and long beard, and sunburnt face. The others were all by comparison elegant and graceful, there was not a man with a beard in the room. The frivolities which the people did, and talked, were all strange to Gregory. He sat by himself and thought very scornfully of all that was going on around him, and yet there was no particular cause for scorn, all these people were enjoying themselves after their own fashion. There were children there, but nobody seemed to notice them much, and they amused themselves as best they could. Presently a wandering child came and established himself near his chair, a pretty boy of nine years old, with long dark crisp hair. He stood pouring all the gaze of his great eyes upon Gregory for

awhile, and then, as if aware that Gregory was lonely and in want of company, began:—

“How old are you?”

“Oh, I’m ever so old,” said Gregory, “a great deal older than you.”

“I thought you were,” said the boy pensively.

“Why?”

“Because you’ve got a great long, funny beard.”

“When you are as old as I am, perhaps you’ll have a beard.”

“No, I shan’t,” shaking his head sagely, “I shall have an eyebrow on my upper lip like cousin Bob or aunt Jemima. Aunt Jemima has got a beard too, but not like yours.”

“Come and sit on my knee,” said Gregory, “and tell me all about aunt Jemima.” The child came at once.

“Now then, who is aunt Jemima?”

“Why that’s her over there. I say, how does she stick that comb into the back of her head without hurting herself?”

“Perhaps it grows there,” said Gregory.

“Oh no, it doesn’t, because she takes it out and puts it on the dressing table with all her hair, at least nearly all. Why didn’t she let the hair grow on her head properly?”

“And do you like aunt Jemima?”

“Yes, I like her now; but I bit her when she drowned my kittens.”

"When was that?"

"Oh, ever so long ago. I caught a black cat, and brought it home, and it kittened in the piano, and ran up the chimney. I saw the kittens afterwards," added the boy, "in a pail of water, all drowned."

Presently three more children, two girls and a boy, came clustering round.

"I say," said the first comer, "*he* says he's ever so old."

"He isn't as old as my papa," said the second boy candidly. "How old are you?"

"I'm nearly twenty-seven," said Gregory.

"And how old is that, is it very much old? older than sixty-one?"

"No, it's not older than sixty-one."

"Then," triumphantly, "my papa's older than you."

Gregory was soon surrounded by children. They soon find out the person in the room who will take kindly notice of them.

"Where do you go to walk?" said one of the little girls. "We go to walk along the chesnut avenue, and Colonel Whitethorpe meets us and gives us lollipops." No people are such adepts at giving innocent broad hints as children.

"I say," struck in another boy, "do you ever go to St. John's Church?"

"No," said Gregory, "I never went there."

"Oh, it's such a jolly place. There's a clock there that chimes all the quarters of an hour, and there are men walking up and down in black nightgowns, with sticks like the bottom joint of my fishing-rod."

"And do you go fishing?" said Gregory. "Yes, Colonel Whitethorpe takes me; but he doesn't catch so many as I do."

Then they all clamoured for a story, just as if they had known Gregory all their lives, and he told them one about Australia, and parrots, and lizards, and flying fishes.

Then a great stir in the room, all the children dispersed instantly, the 'games' were going to begin.

Gregory told me the story of these games afterwards.

"How grown-up people can make such idiots of themselves I can't think, for it wasn't done to amuse the children, and the children would have got on a great deal better by themselves. All the people, mature virgins, elderly ladies, young men and old men, ranged themselves round an open space in a room on chairs, and played at a maniacal game called, I believe, post. The game consisted in rushing from chair to chair, and eluding the grasp of a fool blindfolded in the middle. If one of the

lunatics was caught, he or she took the place of the fool, and the fool became a lunatic. I have often played at blindman's buff, and other games with children, and enjoyed heartily the amusement of the little people, but here the children were sent away into another room to play.

I don't know how it was, but I was pitched upon to be blindfolded first. It is my luck. I steadfastly refused at first, but was at last persuaded. Then the 'fun' began, and oh, what an ass I felt, and how sick of it I got. After about ten minutes, which seemed to me an age, of fruitless and aimless groping, for I could not bring myself to enter into the spirit of the thing, I began to get desperate. I had seized several ladies, but I was afraid of tearing their dresses, and from the shouts of laughter and remarks which I heard, I began to fancy that I was becoming the butt of the company, for my awkwardness or something. I made an inward vow that the next person I caught, man or woman, I would hold, whatever the consequences. I felt quite savage. At last my hand encountered something, which struggled as I grasped, I felt convinced that I had, at length, a man to deal with, and I held on like grim death. If he had only given in, it would have been all right. Suddenly I heard a great crash. Something came away in my hand, I raised the bandage to see what had happened. I

had seized one of the unfortunate dandies by the cloth of his coat between the shoulders, and had torn the whole of that garment off his back, or rather, he had torn it, for I had merely held on.

"Confound you," said he, "I mean, I beg your pardon."

"It's I that ought to beg yours," said I, inwardly thanking my stars that it was a man—for I should have held on to a woman just the same.

"Oh its not the least consequence," said he, looking as furious as a bear with a sore head.

This dandy whom I had spoiled, walked off sulkily amidst a crowd of sympathisers, to get repaired, and I was not asked to "play" any more, lest, I suppose, I should spoil somebody else."

Thus tabooed from the sports of the elders, Gregory went and joined the children, and soon recovered his spirits in their company. The children were sent home, or to bed, at half-past nine, and then ensued another interval of 'rational conversation' and 'music.'

The dandy whom Gregory had spoiled reappeared after a time, but he was floored for that night, and sulked by himself. Finally, at eleven o'clock the party separated after a 'most delightful evening.'

In the next week Gregory was invited to another party, this time at Mr. James Sanderson's, where he blundered through a quadrille, with the help of the

most complaisant of partners, viz., Georgie Longfield, who complimented him on his performance, without, I am afraid, much sincerity.

He met there some of the same people who had been at the other party, and he could see that they were whispering about him, telling all their friends how he had torn a man's coat off his back. Altogether Gregory's *débüt* in Maidford society was a decided failure, and even the Longfield girls were obliged to concur in the general opinion that he was 'no good.'

Georgie soon gave up all idea of carrying on her campaign against him, as she had plenty of other strings to her bow.

Early in the ensuing year the colonel gave one of his famous children's parties. These parties were an institution in Maidford, the children were always thinking and asking when the colonel was going to give another party, and when they were invited, thought of nothing else till the time came. It was an understood thing that the children were to come unaccompanied by grown-up people. Perhaps in insisting on this the colonel was actuated by a feeling that he would not be able to act with the same freedom in the presence of fathers and mothers, and aunts and governesses. It was a great trust, and the colonel felt it to be so. His was about the only house in Maid-

ford where children were allowed to go unaccompanied; for though people talked ill-naturedly and severely about the colonel's convictions, yet for all that everybody trusted him and admired his character, and the children were sent with a full conviction that they would be well taken care of, and that no kind of harm could possibly happen to them. The colonel had a manservant who was, or appeared to be, just as fond of children as his master; who knew all about pins, and shawls, and cloaks, and precautions against taking cold.

The only two old persons invited on this occasion were Bessy Longfield and our friend Gregory. Bessie was a great pet of the colonel's, as the difference of forty years and more in the ages of the two people allowed her to be. She, who would have flirted with an archbishop if she could have got the chance, regarded the colonel with a sort of affectionate reverence, as some one her superior in everything. Gregory says the colonel used to kiss her, and, after all, what harm, he was an old man before she was born.

It must be mentioned here that fond as the colonel was of children, he would never consent to become the Godfather of any child.

"No," he would say, "that is too great a responsibility—suppose I were to be called away

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despise the world and defy gossip, and now it pains me to hear that I am considered an atheist and cynic. I seek, as far as I can with dignity, to gain peoples' good will, and there is some power within me that prevents it. It is too late to alter."

So the conversation went on till twelve o'clock, the colonel giving the young man much kindly advice, for he had taken a strange fancy to him. He very seldom poured out his heart in this way to any one. Gregory's holiday was soon over, and he returned to his dismal drudgery, of which more hereafter. He met Bessy Longfield, in his sisters' company several times more, and his opinion of her good sense was considerably strengthened. Bessy's sisters could not make out how it was that she grew less and less lively, for they regarded Gregory as a calf, and in some respects the description was a good one. He was certainly a calf from their point of view.

As Gregory walked home that night he pondered much about the colonel. How small his own speculations and thoughts seemed to be when brought into comparison with the kindly wisdom of the elder man.

He, too, (the colonel), like his mother, seemed to have arrived at some definite conclusion of belief, although Gregory felt that his mother's

belief and that of the colonel's must be very wide apart—must stand on a far different basis. . “Men call the colonel an atheist,” thought Gregory, “but I am sure that he has just as much religion as my mother, only in a different way;—that is what puzzles me, that different way. Truth can only be one, but, oh, to find out that truth.” In his judgment of the colonel Gregory was partly right. The colonel was no atheist, but a spotless, honest gentleman, serving God in his own way, and satisfying his own conscience which God had given him. Surely such men, however out of the track they may seem to be, shall not lose their reward.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT I never liked in Mrs. Longfield's two eldest daughters, was their behaviour to their mother. A woman herself of no education, or refinement, she had always appreciated her own condition, and had resolved that her daughters should be brought up under all the advantages from the want of which she felt that she suffered. So the two girls were educated altogether away from home. This was an act of great self-denial on the part of Mrs. Longfield, for she was fond of her children, and felt that in thus acting, she was to a certain extent alienating them from herself. The husband had never seemed to care about the matter, except when he grumbled at the great expense to which he was put for education.

Mr. and Mrs. Longfield were one of those ill-assorted couples, about whom we are sometimes inclined to wonder, how on earth do such marriages take place? They, however, had had their romance in early life, which is too long to be narrated here. People who have never seen the world outside their

own narrow circle, and who derive all their ideas about life from novels and story books, (in other words the great mass of people), cannot appreciate or understand what are called unhappy marriages, because they have learnt to regard marriage as a sort of terminus to these volumes of loves and sorrows. *Finis* in fact, is to them the Latin for marriage.

Two silly children fall in love with one another, and fancy that they will be able to pass all their lives happily together: they fancy so just because they are children. When they become men and women, they find out their mistake, but it is too late to rectify it. The pretty ways of *Amaryllis* turn to coquetry or sourness. Mayhap she is detected by her husband sporting in the shade with *Melibœus*, or *Damœtas*, or some other swain. Mayhap she becomes glum, and pensive, and disagreeable as the years roll on. *Zityrus*, on the other hand, very likely has grown hoarse, and cares no longer to make the wood ring with the name of *Amaryllis*, and prefers *Medea* and her tangles, or goes off to play at quoits with *Strephon*. When the pair were young all such possibilities were only in the dim future.

But what has *Amaryllis* to do with fat old Mrs. Longfield? Most probably she would have pronounced the word *Hamaryllis*, and would have

thought that it meant some kind of refreshment, like 'am sandwiches. I only wish to remind the reader that this woman had once been young and had had her romance.

Of course neither of the three girls could help seeing and feeling a little ashamed of the vulgarities of their mother, that was the fault of their education. Had they not known at school, girls who had been put in the backboard, and condemned to bread and water and other punishments for being inelegant in their manners?

Their prim governess had again and again impressed upon her pupils the extreme vulgarity and almost immorality of taking liberties with the aspirate. Now Mrs. Longfield was essentially vulgar in this, as in many countless ways: she had many queer tastes and habits, associated only with curious people, who seemed to her daughters as vulgar as herself, was on intimate terms with the serious wife of Shanks, the butcher, worshipped at the same church with her, and brought her home to lunch afterwards. No wonder that, as Bessy said, the Three Graces did not belong to the same set as their mother. But the difference between Bessy and her sisters was, that Bessy, although she could not help laughing at her mother a little in private, (for this, under the circumstances, I can find some excuse,) that Bessy, I say, appreciated her

mother's goodness of heart, and tried all she could to be dutiful and not to give pain; whereas Ellie and Georgie, seemed to have forgotten altogether that Mrs. Longfield was their mother, and treated her on all occasions with rudeness and open scorn. Perhaps this might be accounted for partly by difference of temperament, but such conduct created a disagreeable impression on sensible people who knew the family, and caused to the mother many bitter tears in private. Bessy used sometimes to stand up for her mother, and remonstrate, and I think this was what was in Georgie's mind, when she called Bessy "unjesuitical." There was always a point at which Bessy's gaiety or folly would stop. Ellie and Georgie always hated Colonel Whitethorpe, though they could not help respecting him, because he used to encourage Bessy in this humour, as they supposed.

It really quite disgusts me to think how those two elder girls, so gentle, and kind, and good-tempered with all the world, used to abuse and storm at their poor helpless, fat, vulgar parent. I should be very sorry to think that there were many girls like them, smooth, velvet pawed, purring, magnificent creatures, who only show their claws at home.

Mrs. Longfield used often to envy Mrs. Hawkshaw, in her happiness with her daughters. But

in truth at the time of which I write, just after Gregory had gone back to his work, Mrs. Hawkshaw was not at all happy with her daughters, and was fancying herself the most unhappy mother in the world.

We are all of us apt to make too much of our troubles. What a magnificent sermon might be preached after the old methodist fashion, by joining those two texts together, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," and "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." The philosophy of the two texts is so very different: the first is cynical, contemplative; the second, wise, consolatory. The true teaching should be taken from both together, that in the appreciation of the sorrows of others we may lighten our own. However, I am no preacher, and perhaps it is as well for some men and women that I am not.

Mrs. Hawkshaw's trouble was this,—her daughter Martha had rebelled against her and gone to worship strange gods. This was literally her idea of Martha's iniquity; for in Mrs. Hawkshaw's creed, people who prayed and listened to sermons in churches where crosses or banners were displayed, were idolators. And, after all her good training, Martha had taken to this, and the mother was powerless in the matter. Once she had actually locked her daughter up in her own room,

so that she might not go to an early service, but Martha had escaped by the window into the garden. After that, there was nothing to be done.

It is necessary to describe how all this came about.—Martha had been to St. John's Church several times out of curiosity, with the Three Graces, and gradually the service had impressed her; there seemed something much more spiritual in the worship, more to remind her that it was real worship in which she was engaged. In her own secret communings she had often been accustomed to blame herself, in that she was not more in earnest about her religion. She was a girl who had within her deep religious feeling, and yet she could not practice the duties of her religion without a certain sense of weariness; she could not, as her mother did, enter into every part of the church service with heart and soul. Her thoughts would wander, worldly matters would intrude. Now the only worldly thing that Mrs. Hawkshaw did in church, was to go to sleep, but this only in the sermon, and small blame to her, for she knew everything that the preacher could tell her: and indeed, in her heart of hearts, rather despised preaching. There must be some people in every congregation who have this kind of feeling.

This going to sleep in the sermon was the one

thing in her life of which Mrs. Hawkshaw was ashamed, and which she denied stoutly. Going to sleep in church, and snoring, under any circumstances, are failings to which no one will ever plead guilty, even on the clearest evidence. But to return to Martha. It was not usually the sermon which wearied her, for there was frequently something new in it to her experience; but the service often seemed to her, in spite of all her efforts, long and dreary. In this High Church service, with its startling solemnity of form, (for to her it was startling), and in its superior cheerfulness of general effect, she thought that she had at last found the remedy. Hence had arisen in the Hawkshaw household a kind of civil war, Mary, who was less impressible and more careless, siding tacitly with her mother, a kind of female Gallio, who naturally, however, kept to the strongest side.

Gregory heard something of this in a letter from his mother.

"I am very unhappy about Martha, she will insist on going to that *dreadful* St. John's Church. —*She is getting quite beyond my management*, and I am sure I don't know *what will become of her*. Mary sends her love."

Mary also wrote—"I suppose mamma has told you about Martha. Mamma locked her up, and she got out of the window. She wears a cross

at her neck, and I heard Mrs. Scrubbs saying the other day after church, 'A careful mother—religious woman—and her daughters coming out all over crosses—it's dreadful.' She talked of crosses as if they were some horrible complaint, like measles or small pox. I think mamma is rather too bigoted about some things. Bessy Longfield has given up flirting and taken to district visiting, Sunday-schools, and seriousness generally. I don't suppose you will care about this, but I have nothing else to say."

Indeed, this was a very accurate description of Bessy's proceedings. She too, like Martha Hawkshaw, was in search of a remedy; she had arrived at that state at which girls arrive who are in love without knowing it. When Georgie had given up Gregory as a bad job, it had been jokingly agreed that Bessy should take him in hand; but she found this young man different, somehow, from other young men—he was so simple and seemed to her to be so much in earnest. There were in him none of those little masculine frivolities which young ladies use as handles by which to turn and twist a man as they please. There was in him an utter unconsciousness of self, a kind of lordly carelessness, which defied coquetry.

He never condescended to talk nonsense, but talked well and humorously, when he was with people

who seemed to appreciate his talk. Bessy had never met a man like this before, who amused her without the evident intention of flattering. It piqued her vanity a little, too, to find some one so evidently unconscious of her beauty. Not that Gregory was really unconscious of it either. No man is so silly as that, but he regarded it just as he might have looked at a pretty flower or landscape. All men prefer pretty surroundings to ugly ones; but Bessy knew that it was not for her beauty that Gregory liked her, but because she was what he called sensible; for Gregory had told Martha this, and Martha had told Bessy, talking as sisters will do about their brothers, as if other people took the same quiet interest in them as they themselves take. Now a pretty girl does not like to be called sensible; a woman would always rather be complimented on her good looks than on her good sense.

So first of all Bessy began to think of Gregory as a clever young man who showed a strange want of taste, and it was chiefly with the intention of gratifying wounded vanity, by correcting this want of taste, that she sought his company; and gradually she began to like talking with him better than with other young men. It was a sort of acquaintance that was pleasant without being laborious.

When Gregory went away, Bessy missed this acquaintance, more even than she owned to herself. She met his sisters with a feeling of regretful loneliness. When she went out to parties, and got flattered and admired by the young men, she could not help making unfavourable comparisons between these admirers and Gregory Hawkshaw, who was not her admirer.

The thought that Gregory might be the admirer of anybody was too ridiculous to enter her head; indeed the thought of love was far, very far from her own thoughts. She regretted Gregory's absence because she liked him, that was all; but I think scarcely a day passed, without her thinking of him, though she never spoke of him, and it never struck her as curious that she should think of him. If Gregory had been a different man, he might, perhaps, have made Bessy confess to herself that she loved him; but then, had he been a different man, Bessy would not have cared two straws about him. Gregory was by no means handsome, that is, with the handsomeness which pleases the eyes of women; but women who are not carried away by the mere delight of the eyes, have a knack of finding in a man's face reflected the beauty which they admire in his character. People often wonder how it is that ugly men get such pretty wives. There is nothing to won-

der at—the ladies, dear souls, are great readers of character; a man, on the other hand, usually marries to please his eyes only. He looks upon the woman that she is fair, and marries her if she will let him.

This is the true theory of natural selection. A man usually seeks in his wife physical perfection and infers all the rest; the woman looks deeper. Hence, one seldom finds a handsome man married to a handsome wife. Fair women look upon the man, and see that his handsomeness is only skin deep, and pass him by, until some plain darling (ladies are never ugly) marries him in despair of getting anybody else. Personal comeliness in man or woman is usually the sign of inward barrenness or deformity. Here again is the true theory of natural selection: nature kindly provides that comeliness shall match, not with comeliness, but with brains. When two handsome young people fall in love with one another the upcome is called a love match, and the result is, a generation of idiots; but fortunately this rarely happens, as every one must know, for it is rarely that one is forced to acknowledge that one has met or seen a "handsome couple." It is always "what a handsome man" or "woman!"

All these speculations refer, of course, to the really natural order of marriages. In high society,

where marriages are arranged and called "alliances," matters matrimonial are the result of chance or speculation; for Dame Nature never goes to Court.

We must not stop to speculate here, as to what benefits might accrue to a community from one generation of natural marriages. It is very seldom in Nature, that is, among the lower orders, that the wrong man marries the wrong woman. It is possible, looking into the dim future of the ages, to imagine a time, when people will live naturally once more; to picture the rise of some great prophet regenerator of society, who will teach men that they must be natural or perish. Nature wills, as she always has willed, that the race of men should improve in mind, body, soul, everything; but society has willed otherwise.

Hence the shallow detractors of Mr. Darwin urge the argument that men have steadily become weaker in frame, vital power, and intellect. All this granted, but it is society, not nature, that is to blame. Society has taken nature's work out of her hands, and nature has grown lazy and discouraged.

But all this time, I am forgetting that the world is to come to an end in 1873.

So when Gregory went away, Bessy began to mope, and this moping, in her own conception of it, took the form of a longing for excitement and

employment. Hitherto she had found excitement and employment enough in society, but that was before she began to think about this young man whom she did not love. Now, it was very different—what had before seemed to her amusement, seemed simply frivolity; she could not herself account for the change, but so it was. So, much to her sisters' scorn, and the astonishment of the Rev. Heywood Buckerston, (elsewhere alluded to as Ellie's pet parson), in spite of all this, I say, Bessie became serious and took classes in the Sunday school, and had a district appointed to her, and for a time she really worked very hard at these employments. The Sunday school work disgusted her rather at first, the children were so dirty and vulgar in their ways. Model Sunday scholars do not exist except in stories. Bessy strove hard to fancy that she was really doing good and useful work from a good motive, as she listened to the dronings and blunders of the children over the Church Catechism or the chapter, but she could not take any real interest in the work, and wondered how the other teachers could abstain from laughing at the queer mistakes and remarks of the children; she astonished the gravity of the room by her ill-concealed laughter, when a little boy read gravely, "And—they—shall—look upon Him that they—have—pinched." One bigger boy,

who was listening, gazed upon the reader with a conscience-stricken look in his eyes.

After a time she got used to this ordeal, and could listen gravely enough to the blunderers, but retailed the blunders afterwards to Martha Hawkshaw, and laughed at them with her.

"Thy mother perish with thee," read an urchin in the most common-place way possible. And once Bessy was reading aloud to the children that passage in the Gospel about plucking out of eyes and cutting off of hands; and one child of an enquiring mind asked innocently, "Will they get their eyes and hands back again when they go to heaven?" Bessy's Sunday school teaching was a weariness in the flesh to her, and a decided failure; she could not sympathize with the children, and felt that she was doing no good. With the visiting it was much the same—she did not know what to say to people when she visited them, she felt herself regarded as an intruder. Here also was lack of sympathy and earnestness too plainly apparent.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Rev. Heywood Silverquick was an enthusiast, and it is, and always has been, the misfortune of enthusiasts not to be appreciated. In former times they used to be imprisoned, tortured, or killed outright. Now-a-days they are simply neglected, and let alone to follow their own devices. It is true that now and again one of them gains tolerable notoriety by undergoing some mild form of persecution; but enthusiasts are usually regarded as either fools or unprincipled. People use a very unfair argument, an argument which is as old as bigotry itself—they say or think, speaking of such an one, this man is either conscientious or not; he either believes what he teaches or not. If conscientious he is a fool, if unconscientious he is a knave. In recognizing the truth of the latter conclusion we are apt to pass over the fallacy of the former, which is, that in talking thus, we define a fool as one who differs in opinion from ourselves.

Mr. Silverquick, when he had taken the orders of the Church of England, had done so with the

deep conviction that a second reformation was at hand, not schismatical, but rather restorative. He at once joined heart and soul with that party which deplored a want of zeal and life in our services, and a looseness in matters of doctrine, which they considered little short of infidelity. "Restore the faith, or the Church is lost!" that was his motto and watchword. The highest reverence to the sacraments, both outwardly and inwardly, this was his first great aim. He had moreover certain notions which did not quite amount to convictions, about the sanctity of the priesthood, the celibacy of the clergy, and auricular confession. When he was appointed to the new incumbency of St. John's, at Maidford, he felt that a glorious career lay before him. No longer a simple curate, and responsible to no one but his bishop, who was known to have 'orthodox' leanings, what glorious things might he not accomplish. Out of his own private means, which were considerable, he engaged a curate of his own views, and people in Maidford soon came in crowds to listen to the new doctrines.

Now this man, who was really in earnest, but had plenty of common sense and observation, soon found that he was not appreciated, and it grieved him to the heart that it should be so. People came to his church in great numbers, it was true, but it was too evident that they came there simply

as they would have gone to see any other novelty. Even those of them who seemed to understand the spirit of the service, who bowed, and stood, and kneeled at the right times, did not seem, somehow, to be a bit in earnest. And it pained him, when in the most solemn part of the service he noticed people staring at him or his assistants, to see what they were going to do next. People evidently regarded the elevation of the sacred cup as a kind of juggling trick.

It is but an unsatisfactory kind of martyrdom this of being unappreciated. It galled this poor clergyman much to find, as he soon did, that he who would have endured, as he told himself, stripes, imprisonment, death, in support of the doctrines of his church, that he should be regarded as a "vain babbler," whose only desire was to be notorious. Yet so it was, he knew it more and more every day; people in society applauded him, and petted him, and encouraged him, but he felt all the time that this was only because he afforded them excitement. The ladies especially were very kind to him; they were ready to go any lengths, and to support him through thick and thin in all church matters. In that matter of celibacy, indeed, the younger ladies were not with him, but each of them kept that to herself. Fancy a young lady preaching heretical doctrines! In this matter Mr. Silverquick sought

and found the consolation of self-martyrdom: as a priest he could never marry, but it was not his duty on that account to shut himself up from the world. So he walked boldly among the assaults of bright eyes, and smiles, and pretty faces and figures, resolving that in this matter at least he would prove himself sincere.

At first the battle did not prove for him half so bad as he might have wished, but it was not to be so long, for one day the idea occurred to the Rev. Heywood that he had made a convert. This convert was Martha Hawkshaw.

We know the reasons which had induced this young lady to be present at the High Church Services, and it was not to be wondered at that her demeanour in church was different from that of most of the congregation. To her evidently it was all real and living worship, this service, which the others regarded as a drone.

Mr. Silverquick soon found out all about Martha and her family, and felt sure that at last he had made a convert. First of all, it did not occur to him that this convert was a very pretty girl. He only rejoiced over the fact that she was a convert, snatched from the errors and backslidings of Low Church; but as, Sunday after Sunday, he looked for her in her accustomed place, he was obliged to acknowledge that she was pretty. Once he met

her at the Sunday school door with Bessy, and was introduced to her, and after that he could take off his hat and bow to her in the street, and now and then speak a word or two apropos of the church, or the schools, or the weather. Then he met her at one or two parties, for Martha had not given up parties, like Bessy, and he began to pride himself upon the temptation that might fall upon him, and his strength to resist it.

So matters continued in Maidford until Gregory returned home in August to spend another holiday.

We must now hear something about Gregory's work.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF course, not having taken his degree, Gregory could not expect to get any first-rate situation. Indeed the appointment which he obtained was by no means first-rate; the salary which he received was barely enough to clothe him, and enable him to live in the holidays.

It is a singular thing that the instruction of youth in England seems to be the last refuge of the destitute. Men who cannot dig, and are ashamed to beg, don't take to downright robbery, like the steward in the parable, but turn school-masters. Gregory was no more fit to be a teacher than the man who employed him. The employer was a man who, having failed successively as a draper and a publican, had married a school-mistress with some money, and had set up a school for himself. His was one of those schools which we see advertised every day: diet unlimited—home treatment—no corporal punishment—terms very moderate. This man took boys at as low a rate as thirty guineas a year. People who read

these advertisements in idle or curious moments, are rather staggered by diet unlimited in connection with thirty guineas a year, and instruction in all things possible and impossible. We will see how this school was managed.

The great doctrine and principle of Mr. J. Bell, A.C.P., F.R.G.S., &c., was "moral suasion." He professed utterly to abhor corporal punishment, which, by the bye, he insisted on calling "corporeal," except in his advertisement. It is impossible to know what idea the term "moral suasion" represented in the man's own mind, but in his practice it simply meant the substitution of physical fear for physical force. He was a tall well-knit man, with a cold, forbidding handsomeness in his features, and glittering grey eyes, set off to greater advantage by dark, thick eyebrows. There was something essentially feline about this man's air. He seldom smiled, but often laughed without smiling; his boots never creaked, and he was always smooth and sleek, and dressed and brushed to the highest point of neatness. His fifty boys were more afraid of him than they would have been of the most brutal tyrant. He used to say that they respected him because he read their characters, but any one who heard them talking behind his back would have come to a different conclusion. It is hardly fair, however,

to say that they were afraid of him; it was the system that cowed them. It is true that this system excluded all physical violence as derogatory to the sacred dignity of boyhood. I believe that Mr. Bell's private rendering of "*maxima debetur*," was "A boy must never be flogged under any circumstances." The man was naturally cruel too, but he was cunning enough to adapt his cruelty to the prejudices of the age.

It was a terrible grinding, soul-torturing system, this "moral suasion." Part of it consisted in frightening the boys, and breaking their spirits by harsh abuse and threats. Mr. Bell would never strike a boy, but he often made as though he would strike him with his huge fist; and he had a way of throwing such life into this bit of pantomime, that it was often very effective. Then there were long punishments of writing lines and learning by heart, which did more physical injury than any fair amount of thrashing, as they kept the culprits from their natural exercise and relaxation. It is only under "moral suasion" that diet unlimited is to be got for thirty guineas a year, and this is how Mr. Bell managed:—Bread was the staple article of diet, of course, but it was necessary that unlimited meat should be provided at least once a day. One of Mr. Bell's rules, which he never allowed to be infringed, was silence at meals,

under pain of expulsion from the room: in this way asking for more was prevented. Each boy was helped twice to small portions of meat, and all were asked if they would partake a third time; the boy who accepted this invitation had his plate returned to him laden with such a mass of food as was beyond even a boy's digestion, after beginning with pudding and two portions of beef or mutton. The hapless youth, thus liberally supplied, was then forced to stay behind and devour, under the impatient glare of "moral suasion," the "unlimited diet" so kindly provided for him. The boy so treated did not offend again in a similar way, and the third time of asking was usually a matter of form. In this way diet unlimited was actually a fact, and Mr. Bell could boast to the parents, without fear of contradiction, that every boy might (if he liked) be helped three times to meat.

This man, by force of practice, had become a tolerable teacher when he had a book in his hand, but caught without his book his gross ignorance very soon showed itself, and he took refuge in lies and mystification, which did not always take in even the boys themselves; but he pleased the parents, and that was quite sufficient for him.

Gregory, on the other hand, though infinitely this man's superior in information and acquirements,

was a very sorry teacher. He was too soft-hearted and fond of boys to be ever any good as a teacher; not that a teacher ought to dislike boys, though he is often (if conscientious) all the better teacher for that circumstance, but he ought only to show his liking for his pupils at proper times and places. Boys usually mistake softness of heart for softness of intellect, (indeed the two things have much in common), and regulate their proceedings accordingly. But it also pleased the parents that Mr. Bell should have a university man for his assistant, and so the principal was glad to keep him.

The state of this school is typical more or less of that of great numbers of private schools in England, and the fault of the existence of badly conducted schools rests only with British parents themselves.

Schoolmasters in England are treated as men of no other profession or trade are treated. Holding a sacred responsibility, they are only allowed to work with their hands tied. The great aim of most teachers now-a-days is not to compass the good of his pupils, but to please the parents. Parents take it into their silly pates that their children shall not be flogged, shall not learn Greek or mathematics.

Assuming that they know more about the cha-

racters and capacities of their children than the man who makes those things his study, of course, if a schoolmaster be conscientious, he should resent such interference. He should say "Sir, or Madam, I see that your son's character is such that I cannot manage him without a certain amount of force; if you cannot have sufficient confidence in me, go elsewhere." Or he might say, "I should not be doing my duty by your son if I did not teach him Greek or mathematics, for which he has a talent."

But how many men can afford to speak thus? Hence, conscientious men are often prevented from becoming teachers, and every facility is placed in the way of the fawning pedagogue, who is ready to please his employers in everything, without regard to the sacredness of the work he has really undertaken.

There should be no question at all whether corporal punishment be good, or bad, or degrading, or the reverse. This is all stuff and cant. Every good schoolmaster knows that there are some children who can be managed only by physical treatment, while others are worked on best by moral influence.

It is the schoolmaster's business to find out and discriminate, and act accordingly, but canting British parents will not have it so. They insist

that the indetical treatment that is good for A is good also for B, and C, and D, and all the alphabet; that the many-coloured, ever-varying collection of child natures shall be lumped together and brayed in one mortar; and so the honest schoolmaster has no chance. A system which is *all* corporal punishment is undoubtedly bad, but not worse than one which excludes it altogether. Were I a schoolmaster, and could I afford the luxury of a conscience, I should say to the parents of my pupils, "Either I am fit to be a schoolmaster or unfit. Here are my credentials. If I am fit, trust me; if not, find some one whom you do trust; but for Heaven's sake, ladies and gentlemen, don't meddle with matters that don't concern you. Suppose you do anything so ungentle as to send a pie to the baker's, you trust the baker; you don't try to regulate the number of sticks to his oven."

It is true that a dishonest man might also use these arguments, but he would very soon be found out, and that is why the dishonest men take exactly the other line.

I knew a schoolmaster once, whose popularity rested solely on the fact that whenever parents happened to call on him, he had a larder to show them plentifully stored with beef and mutton. Whether he was a good schoolmaster or not, I

am as ignorant as were the parents themselves, most of whom got no further in their researches than the larder. It is not only in cheap schools that men and systems of the Bell-type may be found at work—they are everywhere, and in all classes, at all prices; the great work of hoodwinking parents is being diligently carried on—it is as much a trade as card-sharping or embezzlement.

When I said a little way back, that a situation in a school was the very position for which Gregory was fit, I ought to have said rather that it was the only employment that he could get; for he was by no means fit for the work, and hated it as we can only hate a kind of drudgery which is to us utterly uncongenial. It was indeed his fondness for children which made him hate teaching them, and this apparent contradiction I leave to be thought over by such of my readers as care to lay down for a moment this work, and ponder.

In such spare time as fell to his lot, Gregory occupied himself with writing; not indeed with much success, for he could seldom get what he wrote printed, and still seldomer did he get paid for his work; but he gradually began to acquire a certain facility in expressing his views and ideas on paper. At this time he wrote and published a novel, a fact which I found out by accident.

I happened to be in my friend's study one day as he was trying to reduce to something like order an immense jumble of books and papers, when my eye was caught by an ancient looking MSS. packet evidently in Gregory's hand. Nobody that once saw his handwriting forgot it.

"Your asking about this MSS.," said Gregory, "reminds me of a very silly thing that I did once—by this packet hangs a tale."

"Let us have it," said I. Said Gregory, "I'm almost ashamed to tell you, but did you ever hear of, or read, or see a novel called, 'More than Kin, and less than Kind?'"

I replied that the work in question was unknown to me. "But what," cried I, "of that?"—"Why I was fool enough to write it, that's all."

"Come, come," said I kindly to encourage him, "you're not the first fool that has written a book, nor I suppose will you be the last—but what was it about?"

"That's just it," said Gregory. "You see, first of all I wrote *this*, and the publishers told me that it had some merit, but wanted 'incident,' and that if I would alter it and put in 'incident,' they could give me five pounds for it. I told them that I never altered what I had written, and they finally agreed that if I produced a novel with 'incident' which suited them, they

would give me ten pounds. I think I did it chiefly for the purpose of showing them that I could write such trash if I liked. I chose for my story, a plot at once simple and exciting. My heroine, a girl of eighteen, pushes her husband over a precipice in order that she may marry his rich grandfather under an assumed name. She murders her second husband in order that she might marry her first love who is tired of living in adultery with another woman. She dies repentant and happy at the age of twenty-one, and the novel closes with a most affecting and effective death-bed scene."

"Where were the police?" I remarked when Gregory concluded.

"Oh, in modern novels we ignore them altogether, or we should have no incident. Justice is only represented by a comic detective."

"There were some good passages in the book, too," said Gregory, going towards the shelves. "If you like I'll read to you—"

"For heaven's sake—I mean, I must be off—only five minutes to catch the train," so I escaped that ordeal.

Looking over my friend's papers, in performance of the melancholy office of executor, I came across the following essay, which will help to throw some light on his character and opinions.

CHAPTER XXII.

SCHOOLBOYS PHILOSOPHICALLY CONSIDERED.

REGARDING schoolboys as the raw material out of which men are to be manufactured, I am often inclined to wonder, not that there are so many bad or imperfect men in this world, but that there are so few. The beautiful idea of the poet who meditates in the graveyard is doubly forcible when applied to the school, where, mayhap, "mute, inglorious Milton" sits on the same form with "Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood." Here, however, the analogy ends, for when the poet begins to talk about things "born to blush unseen, and waste their sweetness on the desert air," he is talking amiable nonsense, as poets often will. Nothing, however sweet or sour, is born to be wasted. The quality of the article is always Divine, the waste is all our own. If men had been always wise enough only to venture on the sea in sound vessels, guided by skilled and careful experience, the dark unfathomable caves of ocean would have

few gems or trophies to boast of. The storm, or the rock, or the fire, destroy a ship, because they are God's work, and cannot change, but hold their appointed course regardless of what man's feeble hands have made; but I don't think that God ever made a storm so strong that men might not have ridden it out successfully had they taken proper precaution. God has made natural laws and forces, and has given to man the capacity to understand and control them; but men are lazy and make bad calculations, and blame nature for the result. Let us take, for example, six abstract qualities as viewed in the man—cunning, generosity, bigotry, courage, ambition, carefulness, and let us dismiss partly the Aristotelian method of dealing with such subjects.

These six abstractions, taken at random, must have been developed from some germ which existed in the boy, and that development has depended for good or evil upon the circumstances of the boy's bringing up, the germ being originally neutral, neither good nor bad.

The quality which we call cunning, for instance, has developed out of a germ which might just as easily have been turned to wisdom. The boy has learnt at school the false lesson that cunning is a greater force than wisdom, and he becomes cunning.

The cynic will tell us that cunning *is* in this world a greater power than wisdom, and will try to prove by chapter and verse that it is so—but it won't do. Wisdom is and must remain enduring, long after cunning has played out its little game, and come to grief.

Generosity—a splendid word, the picture of a splendid idea, but the generous man and the prodigal are not so very far apart after all—twenty years has made the difference: the hand which had the control of the balance in the boy's mind is alone responsible.

Bigotry. Who shall draw the line between bigotry and faith, or say where the one ends or the other begins? Bigotry is bad, faith is good, yet these two qualities spring from one common origin.

Courage. The exuberance of animal spirits and self-confidence, which produces this, might just as easily have been turned to foolhardiness and cruelty.

Ambition. A word commonly used by us, in defiance of its etymological meaning, to signify a yearning after greatness. There is no reason why ambition should be bad, though we generally use the term in a bad sense; but allowing it to be bad, let us contrast it with virtuous emulation or patriotism. Here we have, springing from the same germ, three possible results. It may seem cynical

to make the remark that ambition and patriotism seem to be the same in practise: but is it not so? A great statesman who seeks his country's aggrandizement, gains his own at the same time. This is only true, however, in the same way that it is true that cunning seems a greater force than wisdom. The patriotism that exhibits itself in public is not to be distinguished from ambition. But what shall be said of that martyr patriotism which bends and suffers in silence?

Carefulness—at a first glance the least amiable of the virtues, but that is because it runs the greatest danger of being perverted. A careful boy runs a great risk of becoming a stingy man. And so we might go on, but I think all this has helped us to the philosophical appreciation of boyhood in its infinite variety of tone and disposition.

We now come to boys in the abstract. Most of the qualities of boyhood are instinctive. They form likings and dislikings, for which they can assign no reason even if they would. They do and say humorous things with the most delightful unconsciousness of humour. I remember reading somewhere, the suggestion that a teacher would do well to introduce a certain amount of humour into his lessons. Supposing the teacher to be capable of such a feat, it is quite certain that his humour would be utterly thrown away on the great

mass of his pupils. The average schoolboy is actuated during schooltime by one idea, viz., that of getting through the time with the least possible expenditure of labour which will enable him to escape punishment. Following this line we arrive at the fallacy which leads some parents to limit the range of subjects which shall be taught to their boys; they argue that by spending his time on fewer subjects a boy gains more proficiency in those subjects which he does learn. Not so, all the experience of teachers goes to prove the contrary, those boys who have learnt most subjects almost invariably beat the others on their own ground.

For instance, a boy who is doomed by his parents to remain ignorant of Greek or mathematics, has necessarily some time left to be filled up. The teacher cannot neglect other boys and subjects to attend to him, and so this one-stringed idea of a single-witted parent becomes a positive nuisance to all concerned.

It is useless here to enquire how the parents have arrived at the conclusion that Greek or mathematics will be of no use to their boy, the only fact with which we have to do is that the boy might get an acquaintance with those subjects without any extra expenditure of time or money.

But to return to the subject of humorous lessons. A boy in school is ready enough to laugh at any

thing which distracts his attention from his work or renders that work ridiculous: if his companion draws a feeble caricature in his book he will laugh; he will laugh if his master drops his spectacles or upsets his inkstand; but read to him in school a humorous passage from Shakespeare, or Tom Hood, or Aristophanes, and he is as grave as a judge, not a muscle stirs. Even boys who possess any sense of humour can never be brought to see the fun of doing lessons. The very few schoolboys who show any sense of humour in school, are generally clever and hard-working; such boys are usually shunned by their fellows, and saluted by opprobrious nicknames.

It is a curious faculty this that the schoolboy possesses, of bottling up all his fun and spirits, of refusing to see any joke in what he dislikes. It is a very difficult feat for a teacher to evoke on a boy's face a real genuine smile. The boy is quite ready to laugh *at* his teacher, should occasion serve, but never *with* him if he can help it.

Many people who have had the privilege of looking over boy's examination papers, must have wondered at the absence of all sense of humour displayed in the answers to the questions. It being taken for granted that no boy, however humorously inclined, would make jokes in an examination.

'It has often seemed to me, as if some one had said to the boy 'produce your store,' and the boy

had replied 'here it is in a lump, sort it yourself.'

Virgil and Cæsar, and Cicero and Homer, are made to talk such unutterable rubbish that one shudders to think of the tortures to which their shades may be exposed, supposing them to be aware that their works are now read by the youth of Britain. Facts and dates, ancient and modern, are too often jumbled together in humorous confusion. Doubtless, however, these productions were the result of much expenditure of physical labour and a large consumption of ink. Here are a few specimens of the unconscious humour of boyhood, culled from a large store of such commodities, which has taken some time in the collection, some of the perpetrators having been known to me to be clever, some stupid.

"Samson was a very strong man. He killed an ass." In this epitome of the life of the Bible hero, the proof of his strength evidently lies in the fact that he killed the animal.

Here is a life of Saul.

"Saul was a man of God. He had three donkies, and he left the ninety and nine in the wilderness; and he met an old woman who had a calf and three fishes, she killed the calf." This was the result of alternate readings during three months, of the books of Samuel and the Gospel according to St. Luke. Here is a historical jumble.

"William Rufus was so called because he had long hair. He was riding through the New Forest, when his hair caught in an oak tree, and he was strangled."

Again—"Joan of Arc was a noted *which*. She was conquered by some English duke, and was afterwards *scratched* and burnt."

"*Jones* in the whale's belly." The prophet being evidently an Englishman.

"The prodigal son was forced to eat storks (stalks); and when he got home his father had a party, with music and dancing."

A life of John the Baptist.

"And there came a young lady and danced before Herod so beautifully; and Herod wanted to marry her, but John said you mustn't marry her, and Herod said, yes but I *will* marry her—so they put him on a dish and brought him up for supper."

These boy writers had doubtless not the least thought that they were writing absurdities, they were only longing all the time for this work to be over, so that they could get out to play.

Play, indeed, is the business of boyhood, which replaces the man's work. All men feel the necessity for work or action of some kind, and play is merely work without thought. All the boy's instincts turn in the direction of action—he objects to having his mind improved; there is no

palpable result to him of such improvement, you cannot bring him to believe in a result which he cannot see; hence even his literary tastes take the same direction as his physical longings. He loves to read about battles, or sieges, or fights, anything, however impossible or improbable, so that there may be plenty of action. An intricate plot, however full of incident, (a very different thing from action) only wearies him—he infinitely prefers cracked crowns and bludgeons to broken hearts and ladies' sighs. This longing for action in his reading must not be superficially condemned as unhealthy, it is rather to be encouraged as natural and unaffected.

His instincts usually lead the boy aright, whereas it is reason that impels grown up people to feel a morbid interest in the impossible, dressed so as to look merely improbable. It is a curious thing that we should give the name of 'reason' (or 'right') to that which leads us wrong. Most of us have yet to learn the difference between right and wrong. For instance, people who talk and preach about women's rights, have rather in their own minds the idea of women's wrongs.

* * * * *

This fragment gives a very fair insight into Gregory's mode of thought. He never learnt, as I once told you, to tabulate his ideas properly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GREGORY did not return to Maidford until late in the summer, and then he did not stay long, for an event happened which changed the whole course of his life; and had not that event happened, it is probable that this history would not have been worth the writing or the reading.

It was not without a purpose that I told you that the colonel exerted a vast influence over Gregory's career.

Mrs. Tarpent, the washerwoman, who lived in one of the Maidford bye-streets, had a small daughter ill with fever. Bob Tarpent, the washerwoman's son and heir, aged twelve, was taking a country walk, bent on mischief or diversion, when he met the colonel, who bought of him an ash stick, curiously carved, for twopence. Bobby spent the money thus: he bought a halfpenny whistle, a farthing's worth of hard bake, and an orange for his sister at home, and kept a halfpenny in his pocket for future contingencies. Presently Bobby grew a little dry in the mouth with much per-

formance on his whistle. He eyed his orange wistfully. It was large, and hard, and tempting looking, as indeed oranges in the end of summer usually are. Bobby gave way to the temptation, but found that an orange out of season was a very disappointing sort of fruit. He amused himself by tearing the peel in bits and scattering it on the path as he walked. The colonel's nephew, a young Oxford swell of two and twenty, stepping on one of these pieces of peel, fell and broke his arm. It was very vexatious, because, in a week's time, his holiday, which he had been spending with the colonel, was up, and he had to be back to his work at the Geneva Pension. However, there he was, laid on the shelf for five or six weeks.

"How much longer did you intend to stay there, Augustus?" said the colonel.

"Only till Christmas, uncle; you know I am to be ordained at Easter."

"Then," said the colonel, "you had better stay here with me, and we will send my friend Gregory out instead: it will be a rare chance for him."

In this way did Gregory a second time drift out of England on the current of circumstances. Observe—Colonel Whitethorpe buys an ash stick for twopence; the ash stick acts like a magic wand, it transports Gregory Hawkshaw to Geneva; supposing that the washerwoman's daughter had

not had a fever, Bob would not have bought the orange. If Bob had not bought a whistle with his orange he would probably have carried the fruit home to his sister. If he had done so, Augustus Whitethorpe would, as far as we know, have gone to Geneva, and Gregory would have remained at home. If Gregory had remained at home—Well, he *might* have married Bessy Longfield, but I don't think it likely, whereas by going to Geneva he became—but I must not anticipate. It might be possible as well as amusing to turn much further back the chain of circumstances. Why did the washerwoman's daughter get a fever? It was found out afterwards that a rat had penetrated the side of a drain, causing thereby the contents of the drain to flow under the floor of the house. Why did the rat do this? here we are stopped, for until we can completely understand why that rat made a hole through a solid stone, (a work the manner of which is also incomprehensible,) we shall not be able to ascertain *why* Gregory Hawkshaw went to Geneva.

Nothing in this world has a definite why or wherefore. It is true that we are free agents, but the force of circumstances is usually too strong for us. All the cumbrous artificial machinery of plots, and masks, and lanterns, and opportune railway accidents, with which we fill our books in order to

bring about the required result, all these things are nothing, I say, or if anything are ridiculous, when placed by the side of the simple and natural chain of circumstances. Can it be that people are so *blasé* and dissipated that they have used up nature?

Does the delicate tint of health no longer please, or is it to hide the signs of premature decay, that the beauty tints her cheeks with rouge? The novelist now-a-days performs the part of Madame Rachel for Dame Nature, and makes her beautiful for ever. The operation is costly enough, and the delicate enamel sometimes cracks, if the patient happens to smile, or the colours are apt to run together in the case of over-exertion. But what of that? Nature is insipid and vulgar without the use of cosmetics. What is the good of society, I should like to know, except to reprove the vulgarity of nature. For instance, I shall sally out into the world presently, and take my hat off to people whom I don't respect, and bow and cringe before people from whom I expect to get something. I shall turn up my nose at honest virtue going on foot through the mud, and I shall laugh when she is spattered by the chariot wheels of vice. I shall tell lies by the dozen, or at least I shall keep half-a-dozen truths in the background. Rail on cynic, for in so railing you condemn yourself.

So Gregory went away to Geneva—but we cannot follow him just at present.

It is not often that an author, whether successful or not, is particularly proud of his own works. He feels about them rather the same sort of complacency which may be supposed to animate the breasts of Messrs. Broose and Crackwell, when complimented on their confections.

To tell the truth, Gregory Hawkshaw was by no means proud of the novel which he had written, and was rather inclined to be ashamed of it. He did not even tell his mother or sisters about it. He would gladly have got rid of even the moral responsibility of having written it. He cherished the hope of making literature his profession some day, and this horrible production of thoughtlessness seemed to hang at his heels like a dead weight, which would prevent him from rising. Fortunately, however, for Gregory, the book did not attract so much attention as he had once fondly hoped that it might. In three months it had been buried deep in the heap of literary nastiness on which so many ugly pebbles are thrown daily by British authors.

Before he went to Geneva, Gregory confided to the colonel the secret of his being an author, and asked an opinion of his work.

“Don’t be afraid of hurting my feelings,” said

Gregory, "I want to know just what you think."

"If that is the case," said the colonel candidly, "I will tell you, I have looked through your book, and it is one that I should be afraid to leave lying about my room, or on my shelves."

"Why so?" said Gregory, somewhat vexed, although he felt himself that the judgment was just.

"Because," said the colonel, "I should not like a lady in whom I took any interest to read it."

"What's that book I see there?" said Gregory, thinking slyly that he had got the colonel in a corner, "Tom Jones, isn't it?"

"Yes," said the colonel, "that's Tom Jones."

"But supposing that a lady got hold of that?"

"In that case, my young friend, one of two things would happen. She would either throw it down in disgust, after the first two or three pages, or she would read it through, and feel all the better for it. You look astonished, but what did Fielding and the rest do, after all, but gibbet vice, and show it in its glaring deformity. Such books as *this* of yours dress vice up like virtue, and make it a candidate for happiness on earth and heaven after death."

"I hope," said he, "I have not offended you, but you are fit for better things. It is a great

pity, however, that you should ever have written such a book."

"I feel that, too," said Gregory.

"Then if you feel so, we may hope that you won't offend another time."

"That I'm sure I shall not," said Gregory.

"If it came to a matter of choice," said the colonel, "I would certainly sooner recommend my sister to read 'Tom Jones,' or 'Roderick Random,' than this book of yours, or 'Springeth up as a Bluebell,' or 'The Lady with the Ponies,' or twenty others that I could name. However as it's only by accident that Tom happened to be here, and as there is a good deal of bad in him, we'll lock him up." So Tom was locked up accordingly.

"But," some lady critic may suggest, "I have read the books about which you are so scornful, and I can't see anything bad in them." My dear Madam, that only shows the skill of the author, for I would never dare to impugn your penetration, and it is exactly on the account of their skilfulness that these books are so dangerous; not perhaps for you or me, who are strong-minded, and don't care about the moral of a book, but for the many who may be led to guide their lives after that moral. In the books of which I speak—apart from their utter untruthfulness of delineation—there is this to be noted, that gentlemen

and ladies moving in the very best society are represented as doing the deeds and thinking the thoughts which should at once exclude them from that society, and all this with perfect impunity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It is probable that if Bessy Longfield had not seen our friend Gregory before he went off to Geneva, I should have been spared the narration of a great deal of unhappiness, which affected not only the young lady in question, but several other characters in my story. The fact is, that during those seven or eight months, about which, as far as Bessy was concerned, I have been almost mute,—I say that at the end of this time Bessy had almost forgotten that such a person as Gregory Hawkshaw ever existed. It was not her fit of seriousness that had produced this result in the young lady, but simply nothing else but the soothing influence of time. How, indeed, is it possible that a young lady should continue to think of any one, even of a young gentleman, for eight months at a stretch, without having seen him or corresponded with him? I do not believe any man or woman is capable of such a feat of memory as that. The relentless parents in the plays or novels are by far the most sen-

sible characters: they are, in my opinion, quite in the right when they speak of constancy as a mere matter of memory.

"My advice to you, young gentleman, is to go away and forget all about it." The luckless youth thus addressed thinks the relentless father a brute and an old fool. "For me," says he, "there is no forgetfulness short of the silent tomb;" but he goes away accordingly, and in six months is as lively as a sandboy, and the half of the broken sixpence has not for him as much value as a threepenny bit. I will give an average man or woman eight months to conquer the most intense emotion under which man or woman ever suffered; in an extreme case I might allow twelve months. At the end of that period, the most remorseful villain shall take upon himself the airs of injured innocence; the disconsolate widow who (as Voltaire has it) sits by the stream, and vows that her grief shall be changeless as the course of the water, shall be busily occupied in turning the channel of the brook and of her own affections; the disconsolate widower will soon find an excuse of some kind for marriage and consolation.

It is the best provision that could have been made for man's happiness, this shortness of memory in matters of the heart. We ignore it in books, because a long memory is an essential part of

tragedy or romance; and we actually read romances or tragedies because of their unlikeness to work-a-day life; because they represent the passions as eternal, whereas they are but fleeting and transient, except in such moral natures as are diseased. The man who cherishes the passion of revenge, for instance, or hopeless love, or jealousy, for twenty years, or as many months, is nothing short of a maniac. Fortunately such people are not (as the story tellers would have us believe) to be found in any abundance. "The worm that never dies" is nothing else than a perfect and never failing memory.

All this discourse has arisen from the natural circumstance that Bessy Longfield had almost forgotten Gregory Hawkshaw. Now it is a curious thing that this "almost forgetfulness" is very often changed by circumstances into a more intense remembrance than ever. So when Bessy met Gregory on one day in early September,—quite by accident, madam, as all such meetings are,—all the old half-conquered, never defined sensations came to her with double force; and afterwards, communing with her own heart, as girls will, she was obliged to confess that there was something in it, that it was not merely as a pleasant acquaintance that she liked this young man; and the misery of it was, that she knew perfectly well

that Gregory was that sort of man who would never fall in love with any girl. There was in him, apparently, no more passion than in the dome of St. Paul's, or in a lamp-post. She herself did not make these comparisons, but her reflections, when translated, amounted to that; and now, just as she had begun to fathom and appreciate her own sensations, he, her hero, was going away without a sign. Why had she ever seen him? Then she began to reason with herself, and ask what it was that made her feel thus. What was there to cause that uninterpreted longing which never left her, that strain on the mind which actually takes the physical effect in its paroxysms of a choking sensation, and an oppression about the breast? She had heard tell of such a state, but had hitherto laughed it to scorn. She hated herself for her own folly; what should one man be to her more than another, that she should feel thus about him?

Meantime, the object of all these ponderings was revelling hugely in the delight which change of scene and bustle always brought to him. I am out of all patience with my hero that he obliges me to have recourse to these one-sided love affairs. But when did the course of true love ever run smooth?

Bessy lost her appetite, and got rather thin and pale in consequence. Her mother sent for the

doctor, who ordered her tonics, which she used privately to throw away. What a fool a doctor must seem in a girl's eyes under such circumstances! Even Doctor Ovid is nothing but a blundering ninny after all, unless his prescriptions be taken (as they were intended to be taken,) by philosophers only. But who has ever detected logic or philosophy in the female character?

The man who can think of his cruel charmer with her hair and toilette in disarray, is in the advanced stage towards being a philosopher. The perfect philosopher is he who has happened to catch an actual glimpse of his beloved one in that state, and whose steadfastness is unshaken by the sight.

Bessy could not, if she would, let her mind dwell on Gregory's defects, because she could see in him neither defect nor excellence, but worshipped him with unwavering devotion.

And now, out of sheer disgust and revengefulness, Bessy felt angry against all mankind, and took to flirting again desperately. As it happened, she found in the colonel's nephew, Augustus White-thorpe, a victim ready to her hand.

A couple of weeks after Gregory's departure, this youth was able to walk about with his arm in a sling.

Unhappily for his peace of mind Augustus

possessed one of those susceptible natures which are specially adapted to undergo mental anguish: he was slightly conceited also, which made the matter worse, but there was at the same time nothing false about him, and he would undoubtedly have made a good and affectionate husband to any girl with whom he might have fallen in love. He was one of those men who early regard matrimony as an institution, who marry in their proper time as naturally as a hen goes to roost when the dusk comes. Such men, when left to their own devices, never marry for money or any other advantages, and they usually manage somehow to choose the wives that are suited to make them comfortable, wives whose souls are not above buttons and needles, and pots and pans, and household cares. I have noticed that clergymen frequently get such wives, perhaps it is part of their wages. Is it not written "A prudent wife is from the Lord?"

Augustus saw Bessy Longfield, and fell in love with her on the spot, and determined then and there that as soon as he was ordained and had his curacy, she and no other should be the curate's wife. And the poor fellow set about his serious business of love-making with as much earnestness as Bessy threw into her flirtations. The more he saw of Bessy the further he fell into the snares of that Circe, and at the end of a week, during which

he had seen her but three times, he was sadly tempted to break through all "Convenances," and ask her the question at once, never doubting as to what the answer would be. His was no timid despairing nature. He fancied that his affection must be returned, just as some aspiring author fancies it will delight the public to read what it has delighted himself to write. It is to be noted, however, that such aspirations usually carry with them the power which leads to success. I wonder how many lovers and authors have been on the brink of success, and have failed for ever for want of some such sustaining influence as this?

In this humour, no wonder, that Augustus should have taken *en grand sérieux* (or seriously, for the benefit of the unlearned) all Bessy's arts and coquetry.

We have now arrived at this point, we have two apparently hopeless love affairs going on at the same time.—Bessy is in love with stupid undemonstrative Gregory, while Augustus sighs and pants for wicked heartless Bessy.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Rev. Heywood Silverquick was perplexed in spirit. He began to argue with himself the question whether or no a priest of the Church of England ought to marry; and this question, the more he thought about it, seemed less and less a matter of conscience, and more a matter of private judgment or 'principle,' and he began to reflect—why should I sacrifice my own happiness and possible usefulness, to a barren principle, which, after all, can be of little use. It is true that this was begging the question, but one is very apt to do this when one is in love; and this clergyman was in love with Martha Hawkshaw, and fancied that with her for his wife his sphere of usefulness would be greatly increased.

How different would the history of this world have been, if principle had more often been allowed to give way to expediency. Of course, strictly speaking, a thing that is good or bad 'on principle,' is absolutely good or bad also in practice; but in speaking thus, we presuppose the truth

of the principle. As it is, however, nearly all the evil that has ever been wrought on this earth may be traced to what we call acting on principle—religious persecution, for instance, has arisen from the principle that orthodoxy means goodness, and that apart from orthodoxy there is no goodness. Viewed in that light, killing, torturing, and burning, became as in the sight of God, praiseworthy. Men are too apt to take for granted the truth of a principle, and infer from it the goodness of the results; whereas, rightly, they ought to judge the principle by its results. A man who acts on the principle that two and two make five, or that black is white, will commit all kinds of absurdity and wrong. Yet men are always ready to act, as they have always acted, on principles, just as foolish as either of the two which I have mentioned. In different times and countries, men have maintained the principles that the earth was flat, or that the sun went round the earth—that the stars and all the heavenly hosts were to be worshipped as gods, or that these bodies were created solely for the convenience of man. It has been gravely maintained that there are many gods—that there is none at all. It has been gravely maintained that nothing exists anywhere—that the Pope is infallible—that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome—that despotism is good—that

lies are truth. Reflecting in this way, we cannot help arriving at the conclusion that there are very few principles in this world that are worth acting upon, and that true wisdom consists in throwing principle on one side. One often hears somebody remark, 'I am doing something which I don't like, or of which I fear the consequences, on principle.' Duelling was the direct result of some such argument as this—a man was willing to quarrel with his friend, and shoot him for the principle of honour.

The fact is, that what we call principle is usually a sort of false pride in the truth of our own convictions, not conscientious but mental. It is therefore dangerous to act on principle at all, unless one takes the trouble to look at the principle from a conscientious point of view. Viewed in this light, how absurd would many of the principles which men maintain so strictly appear. What can it matter to a man's conscience whether or no the Pope be infallible—whether or no the earth is a thousand years old or six million—whether or no the planets be probably inhabited—whether or no man be descended from a monkey or a moleux—whether or no priests should marry? These so called 'principles,' and thousands like them, are but straws fit for children to play with perhaps, but the

sooner the wind of truth blows them away the better. The only real principle upon which we can depend is 'that truth is stronger than falsehood.' When Pilate asked "What is truth?" he asked a question he alone could answer for himself. Truth in the abstract is unfathomable as the universe, but each of us can find enough of it, if we will, to carry us safely through the world. To the conscientious man truth and expediency are one.

Arguing and thinking something after this fashion, our young clergyman came to the conclusion that there was no cause or impediment which need stand in the way of his marrying. Perhaps his is the least interesting of the three love affairs which we have heard, for there entered into it a good deal of business-like calculation. As a clergyman he felt that he was prohibited from all public love-making, and he was a man who had a nervous horror of being talked about in his private capacity. He had just formed that amount of intimacy or friendship with Martha, which gives any gentleman the right to pay a girl what are called 'attentions;' but he by no means wished those 'attentions' to become matter of common report or gossip until he had carried off the prize for which he longed.

Martha, on the other hand, regarded him simply

as a priest, and she had heard that celibacy was one of his doctrines; so that she gave him more opportunities of talking to her than she might have given to another man.

Soon after he had made up his mind, Mr. Silverquick thought it only right that he should call on Mrs. Hawkshaw and explain his intentions.

Martha's mother was very much astonished by this visit when the card was brought to her. What possible business (for she did not think it could be anything else), what possible business could this gentleman have to transact with her, this man, at the mention of whose doings and teachings she had been accustomed almost to shudder? Mary and Martha were both out, indeed the reverend gentleman had taken the sly precaution, of calling when one of these girls at least should be off the premises. Love makes strategists of us all.

The usual compliments, and remarks about the state of the atmosphere began.

"It's not very nice weather," said the perpetual curate.

"No it's not quite so fine as it was yesterday."

"Rather damp, don't you think?"

"Yes, it's very damp under foot."

"And I think it's likely to rain."

"Yes, I think it will rain before to-morrow."

Now Mrs. Hawkshaw knew no more about

meteorology than she did about Hebrew; she knew however that a red sky is mentioned in Holy Writ as a sign of bad weather, and that fine weather cometh out of the north.

The clergyman continued the conversation.

"We've had a good deal too much wet lately"—he glanced nervously from his umbrella in the corner to the clouds outside.

"Yes, we've had a great deal, a little fine weather will do good now."

"Yes, the country wants it badly; think of the crops."

"And the poor people," said Mrs. Hawkshaw.

"It rained last night, didn't it?"

"Yes, I think I heard it pattering on the roof."

Here the clergyman rose with the intention apparently of inspecting the clouds more closely, so as to be able to arrive at a better conclusion. After looking out a little while, he prepared to sit down again. "Yes, I really do think it's time we had some bet—I beg your pardon, I'm sure." During the temporary absence of his person the cat had coiled herself in his chair, and he had sat plump down upon her. His apology followed so close on the squeal of that animal, that it really seemed as if it was to the cat he had apologized.

"Poor puss, poor puss," said he, stroking the animal, in order to conceal his confusion. The cat

evidently bore malice, for she scratched his hand.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Hawkshaw, "I hope she hasn't hurt you."

"Oh no, it's nothing," binding his hand with his pocket-handkerchief in the most cheerful manner possible. "I like cats, I was never scratched by one before."

It is possible that the cat may have made the reflection, that she had never been sat on before.

Then followed a conversation about cats.

The visitor continued nearly half an hour, and still not a word had been uttered as to the motive of his coming. Mrs. Hawkshaw began to think that it was only a call of politeness. "I certainly won't return it," she thought, "but of course I needn't, he isn't married." This was true, but Mrs. Hawkshaw little thought that he wanted to be, to one of her own daughters.

I think it is no wonder that the foreigners laugh at us English, and our social ways—however little they may be able to appreciate our characteristics and their cause. One great delight of living on the continent is that people very seldom talk either about the weather or politics,* the Englishman's two standing grievances. Many English people talk about the weather especially, as if they felt

* Unless there are English in the company.

personally insulted and aggrieved, as I believe they really do sometimes.

On this occasion Mr. Silverquick felt it to be a relief to be able to talk about anything except the subject which he had come to discuss.

At last, the cat subject having been thoroughly exhausted, and turned inside out, he began after a long and awkward pause.—

“Mrs. Hawkshaw, I called to speak to you about your daughter Martha.”

Mrs. Hawkshaw was very far as yet from forming a guess at the truth; she only set her teeth hard, and expected a horrible disclosure, something about ‘confession,’ perhaps.

“I came to ask your permission to address myself to her as a suitor.”

Then, grown man as he was, he suddenly felt himself grown bigger—he felt as if his clothes were too small for him, and as if somebody was pouring cold water down his back—as if he was roasting before an enormous fire; in fact, he felt intensely nervous.

In order that you appreciate the effect of these words on the lady, I must ask you to fancy the state of mind of Mr. Cardwell, if he were told that the Prussians had landed in force on the east coast, or in the more probable contingency of his being informed that Russia and Prussia

have struck their long meditated blow—without giving any notice. After a long pause, Mrs. Hawkshaw recovered sufficient presence of mind to be able to say something.

“I must ask you, Mr. Quicksilver, to repeat to me what you said, I—I didn’t quite catch your meaning.”

So the poor man had to repeat his ridiculous form of words, while the mother collected all her energies to do battle with this foe. He may have varied his words slightly, but he felt conscious of the awkwardness of the position.

“I don’t wish to pain you, Mr. Quicksilver,—I beg pardon, Silverquick—but I must tell you that such a thing could never gain my consent.”

“Am I to understand—”

“You are to understand, sir, that I should never dream of consenting to such a thing. My daughter Martha is wilful and headstrong, and may perhaps—” Here she stopped in some confusion, she had committed an error in generalship, she had shown her weak point to the enemy.

“Is it that you consider me unsuitable,” urged the clergyman.

“Yes, sir, I do, *most* unsuitable.” Then she rose, and her guest was obliged to rise and go also. As he strode homewards discomfited, he passed the two girls and raised his hat, he did not dare

trust himself to speak. He was, indeed, as he could not help confessing to himself, in a very unchristian frame of mind. What right had this woman in her selfish bigotry, to set herself against him? His conscience was so far clear, that he knew very well why Martha's mother considered him 'unsuitable;' but yet he did not bring himself to regard rightly the depth of her antipathy, he only thought of its great injustice. There was only one course for him now, he could never marry a girl in opposition to her mother's wishes. If he had not been a priest, he fancied that even that would have been lawful for him in the face of the circumstances. It was not an ordinary case, as he told himself, the bonds between the mother and daughter were already severed; but being a priest all was over with him, his life must be joyless and childless henceforward. Perhaps this blow was but a rebuke, after all, for his desertion of principle. Then, again, he came back to the idea whether he might not yet be happy, in spite of this bigoted woman; but he knew that this was only a wild dream. Supposing that he could succeed, the thought of the sneers and scandal that the thing would cause, flashed on him: he would be pointed at and whispered of, as the unfaithful minister—the soldier who had deserted his colours—the Jesuit in disguise, creeping into

women's houses to steal their treasures. This should never be.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, on the other hand, acting and thinking, as she always did, on principle, thought the matter over after her own fashion.

How does the author pretend to read people's thoughts in this way?

My dear Madam, all people, even the cleverest, give some clue to their thoughts in their actions. This work, as I said at the beginning, is a study of character. It is not from what people say that one can guess at their thoughts, but from what they do. If you want to conceal your thoughts, give loose to your tongue; ninety-nine people out of every hundred will be taken in, the hundreth will find out all your secrets, judging from your actions and mode of life.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, then, felt convinced that there was a conspiracy against her. Now a conspiracy cannot exist without two people being engaged in it at least, and it grieved her to feel certain that the second person was her daughter Martha, and she did feel certain of this. There was some amount of excuse for this delusion of hers. To what issue did many previous events point but to *that*. She saw it all now; all that disobedience and misconduct on the part of Martha was now explained, she had been deceived and hoodwinked by her own child. It was

almost better so, she reflected bitterly, than that all that hankering after forbidden worship should have been real.

We who are in the secret know better, but this mother hugged herself, as people who act entirely on principle will do, on her own sagacity. How many men and women, I wonder, blind as bats or moles, are continually exclaiming "I see it all," while angels weep and satirists laugh?

What was she to do. She felt that she had no control over her daughter, but she would at least do what she could to save her. She determined henceforth to watch and make certain; she would not at present take any open step. All this, and all the discomfort that followed; was the result of intense love of her child, perverted by blind obedience to a false principle.

Meanwhile Augustus was laying seige to Bessy.

He went out to parties, long before his arm was well, with the one idea of meeting her, and as he could not dance, what could have been more natural than that some lady should take pity on him, and sit near him for awhile to talk.

"Do you think, Miss Longfield, that clergymen ought to dance?"

This conversation took place at one of the entertainments to which I have alluded.

"I don't know," said Bessy demurely, "that's a matter of conscience."

"But in a matter of conscience, you know, one often wants an adviser, and I am going to be a clergyman."

"Then you want to know whether I think *you* ought to dance?"

"Yes, but do you know *why* I want to know?"

"No," said Bessy softly, just glancing at the luckless youth, and turning her head hastily.

"The reason is, that I should be so glad if you would think about me at all."

"For shame, Mr. Whitethorpe, I hate compliments."

"That's because you've had so many that you are tired of them, but I didn't mean any compliment."

"Then you made a very curious blunder."

Bessy always managed in these conversations to turn everything the poor young man said into jest.

"It must be very dull for you here," said she, changing the subject, "with that arm of yours."

"Yes, it would be if you had not been so kind as to come and talk to me."

"Oh, it would be a shame if somebody did not take pity on you. I must go now and talk to some one else, but I'll send you a young lady to talk to." So she floated off with a killing glance over her shoulder, and, true to her word, persuaded Miss Tallbox, a talkative good-natured girl, of considerable

attractions, to devote herself for a time to the amusement of Augustus.

This young gentleman felt immensely bored; he suddenly became tongue-tied, and Miss Tallbox confessed to herself privately, and to her friends in public, that the colonel's nephew was a very stupid young man. Augustus was very miserable, as Bessy had intended he should be. In spite, however, of such distinctions, Bessy herself was also miserable.

Two days after this Augustus determined that he could bear it no longer: he must confess his love, and change expectation into certainty. He only waited his opportunity, and he made up his mind that what he had to say would best be said in the open air. And in this, I think, Augustus was right. There are momentous periods in a man's life when he is in want of something like inspiration, and Augustus was approaching one of these. Thinking philosophically, one might be inclined to ask, What need of inspiration for the asking of such a simple question? "Will you be my wife?"—there it is, why not say it and have done, and wait your answer? But there are occasions on which the human mind refuses to be business-like, and rejects calculation. No man, for example, ever appreciated, or will be able to appreciate, the height of his own hat. If you doubt this psycho-

logical fact, sir, you have only to try the experiment. Be pleased in some moment, when your hat is out of sight, (by hat, of course, I mean the Englishman's pet abomination, called variously beaver, bell-topper, chimney-pot, 'tube'); I say, mark with your finger on the leg of the table or chair, the height to which you suppose your hat will reach from the ground, then keeping your finger on the spot, send some one to fetch the hat, and the result will be most humiliating, that is, if you are a mathematician or a philosopher. I have known a man to estimate the height of his hat at three feet, good measure.

This, I say again, is no childish talk, but a psychological experiment. If the human brain be actually unable to estimate the height of a covering with which it is brought every day into such close contact; if, I say—but let us return to our lovers.

I think that a man is more likely to find that required inspiration in the open air than in-doors. The four walls of a room always throw a certain restraint over one's utterances, and out of doors a man has more opportunity of paying certain grateful attentions, which sometimes go a long way in love-making. Augustus took to wandering about roads and lanes in the mornings on the chance of meeting Bessy, and on the third morning he met her. She used very often to walk out alone

in these times, as young ladies could in Maidford, without running any risk or creating any remark. It is a curious thing that even lovers cannot help talking about the weather—this over, Augustus said rather hesitatingly—

“Will you let me walk a little way with you, Miss Longfield?”

“Of course you may,” said Bessy, “and you shall carry my umbrella for me.”

The moment he spoke to her, Bessy knew what the man was going to do, and she felt a little pang of remorse. She had never carried her mischief so far before, but it was too late now to avoid the catastrophe; she began chatting and laughing as usual, and concealed her feelings in that wonderful manner which belongs to women. *She* was not a bit nervous, bless you, or at least she did not show any signs of being so. At last Augustus managed to begin—

“Miss Longfield, I want to say something serious to you.”

“Then please make it as short as you can,” said she—for the play must be played out now—all the time, however, Bessy was thinking how she could soften the blow without losing much dignity. I believe that either of her sisters would have acted very differently at this crisis.

“I have come out this morning full of hope,”

—thus far Augustus got in his set speech, but nature would have her way. “Oh, Miss Longfield, Bessy, you can’t think how I love you, will you be my wife?”

Then he took her hand and bent his head almost on her shoulder, her glorious hair touching his cheek, as he waited for his answer. They walked on thus a few yards, Bessy pondering remorsefully. He had done it very well, how good, and true, and earnest he was; oh, if it had but been possible, if somebody else had been in her own place, or if somebody else had spoken those words to her; and now this man would despise her, as she despised herself. These thoughts did not occupy many seconds, how was it possible to think long, with her lover waiting like that. When she spoke, there was a look of pity in her eyes.

“Mr. Whitethorpe, I—I am very sorry for this, but it cannot be as you wish.”

“Cannot be, cannot be,” said Augustus releasing her hand, and quickly seizing it again, “but surely there must have been some mistake.” He was so much in love that he talked greater nonsense than lovers usually do. Bessy felt that she must end the scene.

“There is no mistake, and I mean you to understand, that my answer is, no;” there was a tone of almost rudeness in this last remark, which Augustus did not notice.

"But suppose I won't take no for an answer."

"In that case," said Bessy, having bravely made up her mind, "you would force me to a confession, which I feel I ought to make without any forcing. Mr. Whitethorpe, I have behaved very badly to you, I have been"—here she burst into tears, "Oh, how shall I tell him! how shall I tell him!" This was soon over, she drew herself up with a hard glitter in her eyes. "I am not worthy that you should love me, I have been playing with you all this time, to distract my own thoughts; you must think as hardly as you can of me, and—and believe that I feel my own punishment." So she turned and left him standing by the gate with her umbrella in his hand, and he watched her down the road, until she turned the corner of a thick laurel hedge. Yes, this scene took place in a public road, at eleven o'clock in the morning, near a gate, on the other side of which some cows were peacefully grazing.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AUGUSTUS leant against the gate, how long he knew not, probably for a very short time, half stunned. At first he could not comprehend it all—something had happened which dashed all his hopes to the ground at a blow; he strove to recollect those parting words, “I am not worthy that you should love me, I have only been trying to distract my own thoughts.” He could not understand them. What thoughts? What did it all mean? Did this girl then regard him as only fit to be a toy? What did she mean by her own unworthiness?—A cow rubbed its great nose against the top bar of the gate, and blew a huge blast of warm sweet-smelling breath. This brought Augustus to himself; he hated the cows that they should so tranquilly pursue their pleasure of eating and rubbing themselves; he hated the sun which shone just as dimly now as it had done an hour ago. An hour, was it, or a day? He hated everything except Bessy, her he could not hate. Gone away without a sign,—stay, what was this

he held in his hand? It was her umbrella,—hers! He felt undecided as to whether or no he should snap the delicate thing in two, or keep it as a memorial for ever. Ah! blessed umbrella, he regarded it, and out of it evolved Bessy with all her charms. He actually kissed it. He swore that it should never pass out of his possession. If such a thing had been practicable he would have kept it next his heart. Never, I suppose, was umbrella regarded with such affection. He pictured it to himself, after the lapse of forty years, old and dirty, and moth-eaten, and beloved. When he got home he suspended it horizontally on two nails in the wall of his room. He visited the room twenty times in the course of the day to feast his eyes upon it. All that day he could not eat, or he made at best but a pretence of eating. The colonel was alarmed and sent for the doctor, he thought the arm was not yet healed. The doctor came—"Hum, ah, yes—slight fever—too imprudent—but we'll soon set that to rights." It was the same doctor that had prescribed tonics for Bessy.

How those vulgar prosaic questions of the physician must disgust a patient who is only suffering from the grand passion! When Augustus was asked and made to put out his tongue, he felt ready to bite that organ off in his vexation.

When the doctor felt his patient's pulse gravely, and exclaimed triumphantly "I thought so," Augustus started violently; he thought he was found out. "You ought to be in bed this minute," said the doctor, didactically. Then this poor youth, who was suffering, as he supposed from a broken heart, was forced to listen to a lecture on a deranged stomach. "In the present state of your system, my young friend, you must be particularly careful of your stomach. Any affection *there*, sir, might just now be followed by serious consequences." If he had had seven stomachs, like a cow, the doctor could not have taken more interest in him. He began to wish that he had none at all. This man of science departed; Augustus managed to scramble through the evening with his uncle as best he could, and made the doctor's advice an excuse for retiring early.

This doctor was reputed a clever man, too, and, I think, deserved his reputation. It is told of him, that a shaky, nervous person once calling on him, the doctor asked to look not at the man's pulse, but at his watch—"Merely out of curiosity, my dear sir." The doctor opened the watch at the back, and lo! around the keyhole were traced an infinite ramification of scratches. "That will do, sir, you need not state your case, I know it already. How much brandy do you drink every evening?"

Now this man had come prepared with all kinds of excuses and evasions, but the doctor's sagacity floored him—he was forced to confess. But our doctor, clever as he was, could not minister to the mind diseased of Augustus; and the colonel's nephew threw his physic, not indeed to the dogs, but to the cats, who prowled nightly on the leads under his window. Notwithstanding the events of the day, Augustus slept tolerably, and awoke in the morning with a very misty recollection of what had happened; but five minutes of reflection brought back all his misery, and there was the umbrella, that fatal, delicate trophy, staring him—so to speak—in the face.

Augustus had his breakfast in bed that morning,—that is, it was brought up to him, but he only swallowed the corner of a bit of toast; his heart was too full for him to think of filling his stomach. The colonel's man, who brought the tray, glanced at the umbrella on its supports, and doubtless came to his own conclusion about it. Indeed he recognized it perfectly well; he had many times taken charge of it, and had admired the light handle, a Maltese cross carved in ivory, or what he took for ivory.

It is ordinarily the business of servants' lives to find out all about their masters and mistresses, just as it is the business of ladies and gentlemen

to amuse themselves. Our servants are too well bred to say anything in words, but they regard us individually with a placid calmness which says plainly, to one who chooses to interpret it, "I know you are a fool, but it's no business of mine."

- The colonel recognized the umbrella too, but was too wise to say anything about it then.

In the afternoon Augustus suddenly announced his intention of going home to his parents. Now when Augustus had met with his accident, the colonel had written to Warwickshire, making light of the affair, and promising to take every care of the invalid.

"That's rather sudden, Augustus."

"No, I've—I've been thinking of it for some time."

"Your manner betrays you, my boy." Indeed the colonel almost regarded Augustus as his own son. "There is some other reason, tell me all about it."

"If there is a reason, uncle, it is one that I cannot tell, even to you."

The colonel held his tongue then, but determined that he would find all about it; for by putting together different things he noticed, he arrived at the conclusion that Bessy had been playing with his boy's feelings; if so, he made up his mind that he would give the young lady a reproof, let

it cost what it might. To him both the young people seemed but as children, and in his great heart he utterly abhorred the unfeeling falsehood of what is called by girls, flirtation.

This will be the proper place to introduce that story which the colonel once promised to tell Gregory.

"Forty years ago—it is a long time to look back, and the wound has long since healed completely, only the scar remains—it was in a garrison town that I became acquainted with Emily Summer. I was then only a simple ensign.

At this distance of time, I can't remember whether I loved her or not, I suppose that I did so; when one has loved once, I suppose one is apt to forget the actual sensation in the course of years, but I *can* remember that I *thought* she loved me, and she gave me every cause to think so. This girl, this Emily Summer, whom I thought so beautiful, would have made, I know now, a perfect actress; she could throw passion into every motion, and love into every glance. I say, I suppose I must have been in love with her, because, I was at that time willing to sacrifice my profession, everything, for her sake. She swore to me that she would never marry a soldier, and the year afterwards married a gouty old general whose soldiering was over for ever.

I raved to her of my passion, I almost threw myself at her feet; she professed the utmost contempt for wealth, although really I had enough to enable me to live a life without ambition.

She would not give me an answer then, alleging I know not what excuse, and said she would write to me. I suppose I must have been madly in love for I could not see anything unusual in this proceeding.

The next morning the answer came, I hastily tore the threads that bound it, and I read—stay I have the note somewhere. The colonel produced from his desk an old yellow time-stained piece of paper.

“My dear Mab,

“I have had him sprawling at my feet, I was in doubt whether I should secure him or not, but he is such a fool that prudence prevailed, and I have given him his *congé*——”

I read no more—I never knew by what mistake this letter reached me. Soon afterwards my regiment was ordered to India.

She and her husband are both dead now. As soon as I got over the first shock, I came to the conclusion, being a young man and inexperienced, that all women were false alike, I afterwards found out my error, thank God; but I never could find courage to try my fate again.”

No wonder that the colonel regarded flirtation with horror. The first time the colonel got an opportunity he gave Bessy the promised reproof, and I think made himself rather too hard and stern against this young person. "Do you know, young lady, that what you have done is cruel and wicked—that, in your folly, you may have spoilt my boy's prospects for life?"

Bessy took it all very well, she was full of repentance, and the colonel's righteous wrath soon took the form of gentle reproof. The interference seemed so natural, coming from this old friend that was so good, and kind, and true, that Bessy in her present frame of mind, would almost have preferred the harsher tones. But at the end of the interview she was haunted by a horrible dread that the colonel would tell somebody of her misconduct—that is, some one in particular, the only other man for whose good opinion she cared.

The colonel managed to persuade Augustus to give up his treasured umbrella, and sent it back to Bessy, with a note.

"He is gone home to his parents—I don't think matters are so very bad after all. I shall not think any more, or speak, of what has happened. I hope this will be a lesson to you."

The colonel's sagacity was not at fault—Augustus

tus soon recovered his appetite and spirits, and a year after he got his curacy, married Lucy Brownlow, second daughter of Squire Brownlow, of Brownlow Lodge, Warwickshire, and he had a very excellent wife—as he deserved.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ALL these events, and some more on which I shall touch by and bye, took place during the absence from England of our friend Gregory. At this time Gregory's disposition was restless, and made him inclined to roving. He did not stay long at the Pension, soon quarreled with his principal, the "*Marchand de loupe*," as the boys used to call him, and engaged himself as tutor to a Russian family, travelling, as Russian families love to do, through Switzerland, and by Vienna southwards through Italy—Rome, Florence, Naples, Venice, all these cities Gregory visited; and in this way, and by conversing with the Russians, picked up a good knowledge of French,—for let a man have been taught French ever so well at school, he does not really know it till he has talked it. So passed a whole winter, and a winter at Rome was at that time as great a treat to Russians as a winter at Moscow is now to people of other nations. In the spring, when the sun

began to glare down fiercely on the campagna, and the unhealthy vapours began to rise from the marshes, the family, taking Gregory still with them, retreated northwards to their own estate among the steppes. As a general rule all Russians prefer living in any other country to living in their own. The only country that they do not like and cannot understand is England, not so much on account of the climate, but because the social atmosphere is so different. There are no peasants, cap in hand, to greet them as they pass. Most of the people are so well dressed that one cannot recognize a nobleman when one meets him; whereas in Russia, nearly every man with a decent coat on his back is a nobleman, unless he is a foreigner. In England Russians never know how to comport themselves, when brought in contact with that middle class of gentlemen who are not nobles, neither are they peasants; whereas in Russia, there are, strictly speaking, but two classes. The great mass of the 'Bourgeoisie' being of foreign extraction and descent, it is needless to say that all travelling Russians belong to the nobility. These Russian nobles are, however, nothing else but what we should call in England, corn-growers and merchants on a large scale. For instance, at this great house, in the centre of the estate on the steppes, there was written up at the stables and barns, the prices

of the various kinds of grain. Gregory passed that summer and autumn principally in riding, driving, and shooting, with his pupil, and the following winter they passed at Moscow, and here came to Gregory the turning point of his life.

Very early in this history I gave the text of a love-letter which Gregory wrote, although I fear my readers must have almost forgotten the circumstance. In fact it was from this old Russian capital that that letter was written.

I make this part of my history as slight and sketchy as I can, in support of my thesis previously set forth, that outward circumstances of time and place have nothing to do with character; and were it so, to tell the truth, I rather mistrust my own powers in this matter. Not that I could not give plenty of very interesting details about those countries through which I have dragged my hero so hastily, and about Russia in particular. But it is one thing to write about countries as they are, and another to write about them as they were. If I were writing a story, for instance, the course of which I had laid in England in the sixteenth century, I should only have to go to the British Museum and spend a few hours in the library, getting up dresses, dialects, costumes, and manners and customs generally; and then my murderers, and villains, and

lovers, and perjurers, and forgers, should go through their appointed parts, each in the costume proper to the period, and with the proper grammatical phrases, and oaths, and quips, and quirks. But I have only to do here with the character of Gregory Hawkshaw, and the only reason why I described, a little way back, certain love affairs, was because those details all had a bearing and influence on the matter in hand. During the time then that Gregory spent with this Russian family, he had been in pretty constant companionship with a young French lady, who performed the duties of governess to the sister of his own pupil; and this young lady, leaving to return to her native country, Gregory found out after her departure, that her company had been more pleasant to him than he was aware, and feeling lonely and miserable, he wrote the letter in question. He wrote the letter in French, but as I never saw it, or had a copy of it in my possession, I am unable to give it in that language. The matter of the letter was communicated to me by Gregory himself. He used to say that he never forgot anything that he had ever written. I have tried him since, unsuccessfully, to reproduce this epistle in French, (as being more genteel and suggestive of general information,) but that part about squaw and wigwam, and war-path, quite floored me; in-

deed, I could never make out, how Gregory managed to introduce those expressions in a foreign language.

It was at this period of his life, the young lady writing to tell him that she was going to be married to somebody else,—it was, I say, on that occasion, that Gregory threw that picture out of the window. Not out of any ill-will to the young lady, but for philosophical reasons. Here is the letter, which Gregory preserved. This young lady prided herself on her knowledge of English.—

“My Friend,

I was much affect by what you have wrote in your letter which attends me now, there is five days before I am of return. I was also as much astonish as grieve for you. I go to marry me in my proper country—I have always much like you, but I never think for one instant of this. Oh, my friend, try to forget me—I shall always think of you with respect and devotement, as a good Englishman that I like.

To you,

Lucille Comatine.”

Here we must pause to enquire how it came to pass that Gregory, who had resisted so stubbornly the charms of English Bessy, should have

allowed himself to be fascinated by a French woman. I am not sure that he really fell in love with her at all, but when a man has been thrown constantly into the company of a charming young lady during a period of many months, he naturally begins to take an interest in her. And the circumstances of the case were peculiar,—Gregory and Lucille were both in the same position of dependence on others, and naturally found, every day, some little incident or grievance to discuss. Gregory wanted to learn French, and the young lady was just as anxious to learn English. So gradually an intimacy sprung up, and Gregory found himself, for the first time in his life, at ease in the company of a young lady. Gregory, however, was so undemonstrative in his friendship, that Lucille, as she observed in her note, never dreamed that he was likely to fall in love with her, and encouraged him to like her, with all the frankness and vivacity which only a French girl can throw into such a Platonic affection. I believe it was she who first began the custom of ‘tutoyant’ which soon existed between them; but Gregory took the initiative in addressing her as Lucille, and ‘Lucille’ and ‘GREGOIRE’ soon became the order of the day. As there was not a shade of affectation or coquetry on her side, so I believe that for a long time Gregory had not the re-

mostest notion of falling in love with her; and it was only in the week before she went away, that Gregory found out the state of his own feelings. He could not help reflecting, how miserable everything would be when she was gone, to hear the airs she used to play performed by others—to see another performing those offices of tea-making behind the enormous urn of Russian ware, those offices which became her so graciously. To have nobody henceforth to call him Gregoire. In this last week, Gregory had decidedly arrived at that state of mind which is called by the vulgar ‘spooney.’ He could not eat half so much as he used to eat. He was always hanging about Lucille, watching her with longing eyes, and going all kinds of errands for her. She gave him her photograph in exchange for his own. It was agreed that they should always be the best of friends, and correspond regularly with one another. In fact, Lucille treated Gregory exactly as she would have treated a Frenchman under similar circumstances, without the least fear of any misunderstanding.

It is very rarely that these friendships are formed or projected between young persons of opposite sexes in England. On the Continent they are common enough, and seldom lead to scandal; and even suppose that they do, “*Qu’est ce que ça fait?*”

As the time for parting drew nearer, Gregory felt more and more wretched, and he began to think, "Why should I not marry this girl, if she will have me? The colonel was right enough, my time has come at last." It was the first time in his life that the possibility of his ever being married had struck him. He had pictured his future career always as that of a bachelor; now, however, he suddenly began to regard that state of life with loathing. Why should not he marry as well as another man? He forgot at this time that he had hitherto been scarcely able to earn his own living; or, if that did occur to him, he thought that it need not always be so with him. What did it matter, whether his wife were French or English, so long as she suited him and would make him happy and comfortable? His mother, he knew, would be as much displeased with his French bride as she would have been had he brought home an Indian squaw. There are some English people who regard things and persons foreign, as abominable and utterly worthless. Mrs. Hawkshaw would doubtless have said with Rebekah, "What good shall my life do me?" I have loved my son, and believed in him, and striven and prayed for him, and now he has been captivated by a foreign Delilah, a daughter of Heth. Not that she would have given her son up, even then,

but the breach thus caused might have lasted for years. But Gregory thought that in this matter he was not bound to consult his mother, being indeed, nearly thirty years of age. Was he right, I wonder, or wrong, in thus thinking?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CYNICAL ESSAY ON WOMEN.

THERE never was a man, however bad, who did not find some woman or other to believe in him to the last; let us hope that also there never will be. I do not believe that a man ever died without having some woman to weep for him, and suffer heart-ache. What matters it, whether women be logical or no, so long as they are thus tender and true? How weak are the sneers of the cynic in the face of this unselfishness. Most of the heroic deeds in this world, chronicled and unchronicled, have been done by women; all the noblest deeds of chivalry, all the purest emotions that men ever felt, have *this* in the background of the picture, that women are pure, and true, and unselfish. We find the same characteristics of womanhood in Holy writ, but mark; the Bible history is full of the noble lives of good women, but only one is mentioned in connection with her wisdom; and even then, we are rather left to *infer* the wisdom of that Queen who came to see

the wisdom of Solomon. No man can sneer against the true woman, without showing himself to be impure and depraved.

Men are strong and selfish, women are weak and unselfish. One hears very often the exclamation, or one reads the statement in books or newspapers. It is the custom in the present day to sneer at women (indeed this is a favourite weapon of my own spouse in domestic warfare); but after all, what does this amount to, that men can only admire women for the qualities that they possess.

For example, I admire a beautiful picture, but I should not admire it one whit the more, but rather less, were I told that it had been painted by Rubens, when I know for certain that it has been manufactured in Wardour Street.

It is just so with women, men are quite willing to admire, and respect, and almost worship women, as long as they are genuine; but when the claim to respect is laid for them on false grounds, much of the enthusiasm vanishes. When one is told about the rights of women, the equality of the sexes, and so on, one is naturally rather disgusted. If the sexes are regarded as equal, all ground for special admiration vanishes. Men sneer at women just as they would against one another. It is only in quite modern literature that one finds sneers about women, because it is only recently that certain fanatics have

tried to raise the sex out of its proper sphere, and represent it in an unnatural light. The age of chivalry is indeed past, in one sense, that is to say, the homage which men pay to women is not so demonstrative as it used to be; hence one might perhaps suggest that the natural vanity of the sex has been offended, and that women have made up their minds to be admired and noticed for something, whether they possess that something or not. It is not, therefore, that men are more apt to sneer at women than they used to be, but that women now-a-days fairly lay themselves open to attack.

A good deal of this mischief and misunderstanding between the sexes, has, I think, been caused by the pictures of women drawn by some modern writers of fiction. We look too often in vain, for pure unselfish women in these works; we can often find such anomalies as clever women, crafty women, courageous women, or utterly vile women; whereas formerly, all these were the exceptions. A really clever woman is produced, perhaps, in this world, once in twenty years, that is, a clever woman in the conventional sense; crafty women are in real life still more rare. The true and only courage of women is self-denial, and an utterly vile woman never existed, and never will exist. When Curtius jumped into the gulf, he was for the time a woman, and indeed we might almost infer that he had, all

along, a woman's constitution, as some men have, for we do not hear that he had never done anything noteworthy previous to his act of self-sacrifice.

These views are by no means derogatory to women, because, rightly understood, they prove that women are not only equal to men, but their superiors. What is so grand as self-denial? Is logic? is intellect? is philosophy? There is nothing so illogical as self-denial. *Cui bono?* cries the logician, what do I gain by sacrificing myself to others? am I one whit more comfortable, or richer? What! shall I deny myself? says intellect, when the person whom I have benefitted will probably be all the worse for my interference? "Every one for himself," says the philosopher, "and the devil take the hindmost."

Most of the self-denial and generous devotion of women is purely illogical and unreasoning, and it is for this that we ought all of us to be thankful. If calculation entered more into women's characters, how few benefits should we receive at their hands. How many of us, I wonder, really deserve that women should believe in us and be tender towards us? How many of us are apt to take for granted, nay, even to take advantage of, this tenderness?

But, some one may ask, are women then only born to suffer and be patient? We answer, to suffer, no; to be patient, yes. Any one who has had the

privilege of studying the characters and ways of good women, must know that their unselfishness gives to them a positive pleasure. One almost longs that one were a woman, in order that one might appreciate that noble pleasure of self-sacrifice, which gleams in women's eyes, and pervades their actions, as they minister with their hands, or with their substance to some unworthy son, or brother, or husband, or, stranger.

It disgusts one to think of women entering into all the hard ways, and treachery, and lies, and over-reachings of the world of men. The few women (for, thank God, there are but few) who aspire to this, know not what they would have. "We have," they cry, "no ambition, no career, give us both," little thinking what bitterness and hollow mockery those words imply. These things are man's birth-right, woman's is very different. We might be even willing to grant that woman is intellectually equal to man, in view of their two spheres, the admission makes little difference. Woman's sphere is limitless, man's is limited indeed. Therefore, when women say, give us a sphere for our intellect, we reply, you have it already. Those who seek to employ well such gifts as God has given them, need never look far afield.

We would not say that woman's work is to comfort man and to keep his house tidy, and see

that his food is cooked properly, and sew buttons on his shirts, and darn his stockings, that would be too derogatory; but we do say *this*, that woman's work is to satisfy her own nature, and we have faith enough in the sex to believe that a woman who does that is a good woman.

The true secret of this dissatisfied restlessness on the part of women, is vanity; it may be unpolite to say so, but being philosophers and students of character, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact.

In spite of, and altogether apart from their goodness, women are fond of admiration. This admiration, men are too busy and commonplace now-a-days to show, as they used to show it before railways, and electric telegraphs, and shorthand came to make a breach between the sexes. Therefore is it that women desire so foolishly to mingle in those ungraceful things that by no means concern them. This is the true secret, women are unappreciated in their own sphere, and therefore they seek appreciation in the sphere of men. I will answer for it, that if every man in these kingdoms were to spend a shilling's worth of thought in the appreciation of his womenkind, in three months "women's rights" would disappear, knocked on the head for ever. Any man, with a knowledge of the simple rules of arithmetic, may calculate the exact sum in sterling

money which the nation would pay for this desirable result.

* * * * *

These remarks of Gregory's, which have never before been printed, must be taken for what they are worth. I only insert them here to show that Gregory had always, what every man should have, a great reverence for the self-denial and purity of women. A man who believes in good women, and little children, cannot be so very far from the truth, and must certainly believe in Heaven.

Gregory spent a wretched fortnight while he was waiting for an answer to this letter, and used to regard, many times a day, the picture which was all the material element of consolation which was left to him, except his pipe.

We know already the fate of that portrait.

I cannot account for the rapid manner in which Gregory's passion cooled down, except by supposing that he never was in love with the young lady. Indeed, his whole conduct at this time was most impetuous and unphilosophical. Now Gregory prided himself on being a philosopher; and indeed he had laid down for himself, several very excellent rules of conduct:—one was, never, under any circumstances, to take a hint. The man who takes hints is unconsciously play-

ing the game of others to his own discomfort—people who give hints usually have a malicious design which makes them ashamed to speak out. This rule is especially useful for persons in a dependent position, but is good for all.

Another of Gregory's rules was, never in trifles to sacrifice expediency to principle. The man who acts on this rule wears a sort of armour which blunts the petty weapons of spite and malice used by his adversaries; and the use of this rule is quite compatible with self-respect. "If people make disagreeable remarks about me in my hearing," said Gregory, "I conclude that they intend to hurt my feelings.—Acting on principle, I ought to get into a rage and show that I am wounded; my adversaries thus gain the desired triumph. If on the other hand, I take no notice, but hold my course tranquilly, my adversary is himself wounded in his tenderest point." An excellent rule this, for those who are strong enough and wise enough to follow it.

Many such precepts has Gregory enunciated to me at different times.

It is not too much to say, that from this period of his life, Gregory's convictions and inner consciousness underwent a thorough but gradual change. The thought that he need no longer be a vagabond, and might yet do something good

in the world, brought with it much that was softening and humanizing. Hitherto he had lived only for himself. He had only thought of this world as of a place in which his only work was to struggle on and make himself comfortable to the end. Those problems of life and death, over which he had pondered so deeply, had seemed only to affect himself. In fact he began to see everything in a new light.

In a new light! What a deep meaning do these words convey! The man who has seen a thing in only one light, from only one standpoint, might just as well never have seen it at all, for all the impression he is likely to carry away with him. Hope pronounces good—that in which despair can see nothing but ugliness and decay—and Gregory began to hope. I am not sure whether the refining influence of woman had not something to do with the change, for he who begins to dream of women in connection with his own future, cannot be anything but hopeful, just as the sun and the bright sky affect most men's spirits like a stimulant.

So it was, however, that about the time that it occurred to Gregory to think why should I not marry? the thought occurred to Gregory, why should I not *Believe*? Let a man who is sincere only ask himself that question, and search out

diligently an answer to it, and all will be well with him. What is it after all that prevents a man from believing? that makes him doubt, and hesitate, and enquire?—simply this, that men of thought do not like to believe in anything that is not logical. People who do not think much, will perhaps be shocked superficially, by being told that religion is the most illogical of all things. (I say, superficially shocked, because, God forbid, that I should write anything to do more than that).

I say that religious belief is common sense, and that common sense has no more to do with logic, than argument has with having one's hair cut, or with warming one's self at the fire.

My friends, in this matter throw logic to the winds.—'Only believe.' Begin at the beginning, pray and work upwards towards the Light, never heed controversy, or this or that dogma. All these things are of men's invention, the Light will dawn and grow brighter in spite of them; as the actual physical dawn comes upon us every morning regularly, in calm disregard of all the rules and disputes of science.

There are, I fear, too many amongst us in these times, who have fallen into the bondage of logic and intellect; who cannot see the difference between the illogical and the impossible.

A man is all the better for believing that there is something which cannot be reduced to logical rules. It is a remedy for the torture of doubt—the only remedy. It is not enough, however, simply to believe that: the man who stops there, had better have remained a doubter. This is a pleasanter but more terrible form of unbelief; but the man who is in earnest will never rest at this point. He will never be content to sit calmly with folded hands after his bonds have been removed or loosened; rather he will rise, and cast his bonds from him and go on, a man again once more, and not a slave.

I do not wish to preach, though I think that what I have said can at least do no harm; but I have thus explained the change that came at this time upon Gregory Hawkshaw.

He now began really and truly to be a man, with all a man's ambition, and appreciation of his own powers.

In the spring of the year, he returned to England.

During his stay on the continent, Gregory had been kept pretty well informed about the state of affairs in Maidford. Home letters had told that the Longfields had left the place, and gone to reside near London, and that there was trouble at home about his sister Martha.

You will remember that Mrs. Hawkshaw, acting under a mistaken notion, had determined to watch her daughter, and be guided by circumstances.

When Martha and Mary returned after meeting the perpetual curate, they at once were aware that something had gone wrong with their mother. There was a sort of cold constraint about her manner which convinced the girls that something had happened. What it was they could not guess.

It is very distressing, this way which some very excellent people have of showing that they are offended, without making any actual complaint, or alleging any reason for their demeanour.

"What's the matter, mamma?" said Martha at the one o'clock dinner-table, "I'm sure something has vexed you."

"Nothing, my dear, more than usual," said the mother, with an expression of doleful sarcasm. Then Martha thought it best to hold her tongue, having experience of her mother's ways. Mrs. Hawkshaw was a truly religious woman, and I have no doubt that her religion was a great comfort to her, and supported her in all her trials; but somehow it did not make her cheerful outwardly. She used to deny indignantly that religion made people dull, being herself a living instance to the contrary; the fact was that she made rather too much of her religion. Nothing that did not savour

of Heaven seemed of any moment to this good lady. One can imagine that this kind of feeling might make a company of saints and angels very cheerful and lively together. But wicked worldly people always find a saint rather dull company. I have known, however, at least one woman who was deeply religious without being dull.*

That meal passed over dolefully enough; the mother ate her morsel, regarding severely the while the ribs of beef on the table, only glancing once or twice reproachfully on her daughters when their conversation approached to liveliness. The worst of it was that when Mrs. Hawkshaw was vexed with one person, she always had the air of being vexed with everything and everybody, even the faithful Deborah came in for her share of the maternal indignation.

"Hark at mamma scolding Deborah," said Mary, "you may be sure that she's angry with one of *us*, when she does that." After some fashion like this do all young people speak of their parents, when those parents are not present. How can we expect otherwise. After all parents are but human, and have their failings, and young people are usually sharp enough to see them. Let us hope that our children are never very severe in their

* She will read this, and know that I refer to herself.

remarks, and that they are content to talk only of the failings which we really possess.

"I don't know," said Martha, "why she should be angry. I have not done anything."

"Nor I either, perhaps it's the old story about the church——"

"It's just possible that Mr. Silverquick might have called, you know we met him—that would account for everything. I dare say she had some religious argument with him."

"How absurd you are, Martha. What should he call here for?"

Martha thought that he might possibly have called to see her, but she did not say so.

"I'll try to find out. Somebody must have been here."

"Mamma," said Martha, demurely, when her mother appeared presently. "Mamma, did any one call here this morning?"

"Yes, some one did call. Why do you want to know?"

Martha little knew what construction would be put on her innocent remark, "I only ask out of curiosity."

"Well then," said Mrs. Hawkshaw, with what she meant for a sneer, "since you are so *curious* to know, some one did call." It is always exceedingly painful, to a listener, when a good man or

woman tries to sneer. My friends, let us leave sneering to authors, and cynics, and atheists.

"I'll bet anything—" said Mary.

"Mary what will you say next, you are getting quite as vulgar in your conversation as a man."

"I was going to say next, only you wouldn't let me, that it must have been Mr. Fullbody." Now Mr. Fullbody was the Low Church rector.

"It could not have been Mr. Fullbody," said Martha, "you know he has had the gout since the bishop came."

Now these speeches were very wicked on the girls' part, and more especially was that speech of Martha's, for it was the subject of profane jest in Maidford that the rector had over-eaten himself at the bishop's table, and that hence arose his attack of gout.

But the girls were both a little provoked by their mother's manner, which indeed deserved to be called aggravating.

"Martha, Mary," said the mother, "how can you be so wicked and undutiful; I never was spoken to so before."

This led to a little domestic scene which I need not describe. Mrs. Hawkshaw descended to general charges of misconduct against her daughters, and the daughters forgot themselves a little, and spoke unkindly, but they afterwards asked pardon, for

they were both really good girls. This apology Mrs. Hawkshaw received ungraciously enough, for suspicion still rankled in her soul.

After his repulse the perpetual curate set manfully about his work, resolved that he would conquer his private emotions, by the sense that he was doing his duty. He felt nevertheless that he was a fallen man, perhaps if he had been successful in his suit, he would have taken a different view of matters, but he suffered under the double degradation that not only had he hankered after worldly things, but that those worldly things had eluded his grasp; and the presence of Martha Hawkshaw at his services added greatly to his discomfiture. He could not go through his office of praying and preaching with any satisfaction to himself, while he knew she was there, so near, yet so far off. He avoided her company, and contented himself with a bow, or the commonest words of civility, when he met her. He began almost to regard her in his own mind, as the saint of old must have regarded his temptress. He felt that there was nothing for him to do but to go away. But just after he had come to this conclusion, something happened which caused him to hesitate.

Mrs. Hawkshaw, actuated, as she supposed, by a sincere desire for her daughter's welfare, set herself to watch and find out, and indeed made herself very

hard and stern. Martha, not knowing the whole of her mother's motives, began to think rather hardly of her parent. Moreover, she had to listen to a great many remarks about the clergyman under whose spiritual care she had placed herself, of a kind, which proceeding from the mouth of a worldly woman, would have seemed very ill-natured, and often she could not help saying a word in defence, not indeed of that clergyman, but of the views which he held, and the things which he did; all this the mother misinterpreted, and indeed she was fast driving Martha to take a dangerous interest in the foe. At last, Martha was wearied out by these attacks, and one morning after one of the usual scenes, she said, "Mamma I am not happy here, I'll go away and be a governess." And here, by way of comment, I will insert an unpublished fragment expressing Gregory's views on prejudice.

CHAPTER XXX.

PREJUDICE.

I THINK a great many people who use this word, do so, without knowing its real meaning. Either they have forgotten, or have never known, the meaning, which the word, when imported into the language of these realms, was intended to convey. *Præ judicium*, a judgment beforehand, *i.e.* before the fact. How many of the notions, which are commonly called prejudices, are really judgments after the fact. Hence that terrible adjective "prejudiced," which is very rarely used, except by accident, in its proper sense. "Such a proceeding," says somebody, "is very prejudicial to health, or character, or to the paper of a room, or a flower garden." People have, or say that other people have, "prejudices" against smoking, against dancing, card-playing, crosses, incense, surplices, dogs, children, foreigners, an endless list; so also, we hear of prejudices in favour of the same or similar things or persons. These are, however, not

prejudices at all, but merely likings and dislikings, which are well enough if they are well-founded. The real prejudice lies deeper than all this.

It is then of the abstract prejudice, which underlies and influences our feelings, that we wish here to discourse. If we are able to give a sensible reason for our tastes or antipathies, these are not prejudices at all, for if we judge the actions of others before the fact, our judgment is sure to be wrong, and contemptible, and stupid.

All prejudice, or judgment, without a knowledge of facts, must be wrong and unfair.

There are two distinct kinds of prejudice, one proceeding from weakness of intellect, the other from a twist in the understanding; this latter kind of prejudice we call bigotry.

I say that the first kind comes from weakness of intellect, because all prejudice implies a certain amount of thought; a man who cannot think can form no judgment at all, either good or bad, and just as some men and women, who have no children of their own, adopt and rear those of others, who have been more fortunate (or shall we say, unfortunate?) so, people who cannot form a prejudice or any kind of judgment for themselves, are fain to cling to the prejudices which they find current among people who have just wit enough to lead themselves astray. It is in this bastard form, that

prejudice usually appears before the world, and in which it does most mischief. But on this point more anon.

There is nothing which disgusts men of thought in society more than this aptitude which they find in average men and women, to give a definite decision on grave matters, without a knowledge of facts.

There are people with whom it is impossible to hold a sensible conversation, because one knows beforehand that they are ready with their opinion on any subject, before even it is introduced. This peculiarity is usually called in society power of conversation, whereas it is really nothing but weakness of intellect. It has been remarked by some philosopher, that it is a very difficult thing, but also a praiseworthy acquirement, to be able to say "no." The man whom we should respect the most, however, is he who has the courage to say, "I don't know." Society would take this for a confession of ignorance and incapacity; to us who are moralists, it is the noblest confession that a man can make, even from the lips of a fool—but we forget that there are no fools in society. The wise man who says, "I don't know," says in effect, "I will suspend my judgment."

A judgment given in a hurry, at a moment's notice, is what the world calls brilliant—a judgment

suspended for an hour, a day, a month, is noble.

It would be well for all of us in these days, when theories, new and old, are continually clashing around us, when old theories are being revived or destroyed, and new ones are being laughed at,—it would be well, I say, for us all to learn that lesson, the greatest lesson that philosophy can teach, to reserve our judgment. In these days prejudice too often takes the form of ridicule. A shallow joke is too often considered a substitute for argument, and quite sufficient to overthrow the result of years, perhaps, of intellectual toil. Some great brainworker strives to set people's opinions right on some subject on which they have been taught to think wrongly, and the broad grin and "eternal guffaw" of prejudice rewards the labourer for his toil.

'Such and such a theory is contrary to our own experience,' says prejudice, 'or to what we have been taught, or to what our ancestors believed, and therefore it is bad. We won't examine it—the argument may be sound, what care we? *Anathema maranatha!* Has it not always been so? Has not the history of the world been nothing but the history of an eternal struggle against prejudice?' I wonder how many men have maintained unconsciously, and do so still, that the eternal laws of God are forgeries and fictions? What is truth? what is fiction? We know nothing,

yet we profess to know everything. We make the mistake of reducing the resistless progress of the universe to a mere speck, to the span of our own little lives in fact. What is life? What is death? Again we know nothing, but we profess to define both. It is in view of this utter ignorance of ours that prejudice seems so utterly small and ridiculous.

My friends, let us watch and wait reverently for the truth, and if we venture to enquire, let us remember always that thought can be conquered by thought alone. If a man's arguments be wrong, let us examine and confute them if we can, or acknowledge them right if they be so; but in any case, let us not judge without examination. In that case we are setting up our own folly, which we call our experience, against the progress of truth.

It is not so much to ourselves that our prejudices do wrong, but to those who copy them from us. Let us take care lest we become, in very deed, blind leaders of the blind, and lest both fall into the ditch together.

That is a selfish reason for taking care, but as men go, it is a just one. The guide who leads astray, goes astray himself. Let us remember that, and be careful for others, even for our own sake.

The kind of prejudice which proceeds from a

twist in the understanding is called bigotry. It is no use fighting against this, or arguing against it—all we can say is, ‘Don’t listen to it.’ There is no hope for the bigot; he is a madman, but at least we can warn others against him. Men or women who say in these days, we know the truth, not by education or experience, but by inspiration, are bigots. There are plenty of such people in the world.

Prejudice says, ‘this is contrary to experience.’ Bigotry, ‘this is contrary to the truth.’ It is sometimes possible to persuade a man that his experience is wrong, or that he has not been taught aright. But how can one deal with the person who says, “I am right, because I feel that I am right. Something within me tells me that I am on the certain and only road to truth and salvation. All others are blundering on through darkness to eternal fire. The Word of God tells me this for certain.” And so, on the beautiful foundation of Bible truths, bigotry has built up a hideous superstructure of form, and lies, and sham, and ceremonies. A really consistent Christian, if we can imagine such a character, would be the true cynic of the nineteenth century, but he would not have a very comfortable time of it. Pontius Pilate and Herod would be down on him directly, and Mrs. Grundy would cry, Crucify him! The truth came

to make us free, but the growth of this freedom is gradual enough, and will be so until the time comes when men dare to speak out.

Is it not true that in our social atmosphere in the present day there are many signs of uneasiness and disturbance? We all know that it is so, and the reason is that numbers of people are troubled with thoughts and ideas which they dare not speak out. Prejudice knows it. Bigotry knows it, and therefore are they more clamorous than they ever have been.

If all the clergy in England were on a certain day to preach, each from his own heart and convictions, what a strange medley of heresies would be produced to be sure!

Why is it that we require to be told the same things over and over again, every Sunday, and all the year round? If we believe them, we should not want to hear them more than once. We are taught once that the sun does not go round the earth, and we believe it. We are taught once that honesty is the best policy, and we believe that, though it is contrary to all our experience.

Here Gregory gets satirical and disagreeable, so we will quote no more.

It has been already mentioned that Colonel Whitethorpe used sometimes to take children out fishing, and we have heard Bobby Sanderson boast

that the colonel did not catch many fish on such occasions. Indeed this was so, for when our friend took children with him, it was only for the sake of giving them amusement and of listening to their artless prattle. About a mile and a half from Maidford, was a large reservoir or lake, as some people called it, which was well stocked with perch and pike. Thither on a certain September day did the colonel repair with two or three young friends; it was true that he carried with him his own rod and "tackling," but he did not make much use of them, as there was always plenty of work for him in running about to show the children the best places, and in putting on baits for them.

I think it is very pleasant to watch the eager delight of boys when engaged in fishing. To us, indeed the sport may seem of the dullest kind; nothing short of the lordly salmon, or the dashing wary trout, can perhaps excite enthusiasm in our own bosoms. Even these excitements have possibly begun to pall on us. But mark the boy, all the hunter instincts aroused within him, glowing from his face, and making him quiver with excitement. Surely Gordon Cumming himself never felt prouder of his victory over a tawny black-maned terrible lion, than the boy does of some small fish, whose weight is not sufficient to try the string upon which he suspends it in triumph. We men have our

triumphs and excitements, but how tasteless they are! How soon over and despised! The side of a stream has always been a favourite place for moralizing. Flow on, O shining river! *Lavetur et lavetum in omne volubilis ævum*, and the banks crumble, and the old willows droop lower and lower over the stream, and brambles grow up between the trunks. Is this the stream in which we used to fish and bathe when we were boys? Other boys fish in the stream now, and have their favourite 'holes' for perch or roach. Where are the holes and crannies which we used to favour? gone, blocked up, whirled away on the stream of time and the brook. Other boys splash, and sport, and play, on the shallows which were deeps when we were boys. On for ever rolls the stream, shallow and bright in summer, deep and turbid in winter. Another current, just as variable, equally resistless, carries us along too.

I was leaning over an old bridge the other day, and reflecting after this fashion as the water passed swiftly and smoothly under my gaze, and gurgled beneath my feet through the arches. I remembered how, years ago, I used to find delight in causing pieces of wood to sail through those silent arches. I threw in a piece of wood, and ran to the other side, to see if I could appreciate any of the old boyish feeling; the wood never appeared at all, stopped doubtless by some accu-

mulation of rubbish. Alas! when we were boys there was no rubbish there; the stream was clear, and broad, and unencumbered, and full of the most magnificent fish. So pondering, a youth of twelve, rod in hand, and carrying on a forked stick certain very mean and coarse fish, and all so small! came on the bridge and addressed me.

"Do you think this a good place, Sir?"

"It used to be," said I, "when I was a boy. Just try there, down by that stump, I caught a big one there once."

"Was it bigger than these?" said my young acquaintance, lifting his spoils on high.

"I don't know," said I "those are very big."

Bigger than those, indeed! Why the fish we used to catch in that stream were enormous—I give you my word, enormous. We often had great difficulty in pulling them out, and felt a delight in playing them scientifically.

"I've got him, such a beauty!" shrieked the youngster, "no, he's off." Something, then, was still unchanged, for I remember distinctly that the biggest fish used always to get off. If I had only succeeded in landing some of the big fish which I had 'hooked' in that stream!

Everything is smaller, and meaner, and more contemptible than it used to be. Presently the fisherman had another bite. Stay, he has him at

last, he brings him to me in triumph. "Thank you, Sir, for showing me that place. It's the largest I ever caught."

"And are there many fish here now?" said I.

"I should think so, and such whoppers too, some of them. Why my brother, down below there, caught one just now as big as a carpet-bag. Here he comes."

The fish in question was in reality about as long as a tooth-brush, but I am quite certain that that roach I caught by the old factory twenty years ago *was* as big as a carpet-bag. I look in vain now for the old ruined factory, where I used to go bird's-nesting, wading underneath the dry arches by the silent rotting wheel, in the middle of which I found a wagtail's nest. Wagtails don't make nests there now, or anywhere, as far as I know. The old factory has been transformed into a great white palace of a mill, and the wheel is going all day long, and the great trout, such as are left of them, are nosing up the mill-tail right under the paddles, and the boys of to-day watch them and point them out to me, just as if I had never seen, or caught, a trout in my life.

Doubtless, were I boy, I should still catch huge fish in the stream; the new factory would please me just as well as the old one, and the brook would still swarm with fish. Oh, happy times

going on for ever, as does the river! We are boys no more, but there are always boys to whom the stream is a delight, and we, for whom delight is no longer, must find our pleasure in watching them. Flow on, brave stream! glitter among the pebbles and weeds, O fish, huge with scales, flashing golden in the sunshine. Fish, bathe, play on, O boys! while the sunshine is in the valley, bask in it. The time will come when the stream will cease to please, when the valley will be dull and dreary, when the shadows grow more and more gloomy as the sun sinks slowly.

I dare say some such original reflections as these have occurred to many people, and very possibly our friend, the colonel, may have been occupied by some such thoughts. At all events, he was recalled to himself, by a shout from Bobby Sanderson who was stationed close to him. "*Oh please* come, such an enormous fish has taken my bait." "Hold your rod still—don't move," shouted the colonel in great excitement. Bobby was fishing with an ordinary three-jointed rod and common perch tackle—the colonel's rod and reel lay idle on the bank.

"Now then, Bobby, what is it?"

"Such a huge fish, I saw his tail flap."

"All fish have got tails, Bobby, but where is he?"

"He's gone under the bank—shall I pull up?"

"No, no."

Then the colonel began to take Bobby's rod to pieces, beginning with the bottom joint, and fastened the line on to his own reel—for he was never at a loss for an expedient—as he took off each joint he threw it behind him. The children, who had gathered round him, wondered what he was going to do.

"Now that we are ready for him," said the colonel, "we can wait a little—just go and get one or two stones, Bobby. Now throw one in as near as you can, where he went."

The fish darted out directly. It was beautiful to see how the colonel managed him—no hurry, everything coolness and calculation. The children danced and shouted with excitement and delight. Presently, Bobby had the pleasure of holding the big rod while the colonel put his net under a pike, which weighed no less than ten pounds. "You are in luck, Master Bobby, but it was lucky that I was near you." Bobby did not, however, acknowledge this in his own mind. The fish had taken *his* bait, that was enough for him. He had never seen such a fish in his life; he was afraid of it, even long after it was dead. He felt every inch a successful sportsman.

So, one or two small perch caught, and compared disparagingly with the big pike, they all marched merrily homewards, the colonel dropping his small charges at their respective homes.

This big pike will be an era in Bobby's life. He will give himself airs about it over his school-fellows, and cut its length on the desk with two notches. He will be always expecting to catch another like it, but never will; and I dare say, when he grows up he will remember that pike, and be reminded of the kind colonel who helped him to catch it, and who was a friend and companion to himself, and all children. My friends, if we want our memory to live for a few years, let us make friends betimes with the young people. Our days will soon be over, and they will reign in our stead and talk kindly of us. How can a man, who cultivates only the acquaintance of his equals in age, expect to be remembered fifty years hence, or even twenty. True, it will matter nothing to us whether then we be remembered or no, but it is pleasant to think now, when the reflection may cheer us on, that we shall not utterly be forgotten when the sods fall on our coffins. It is not pleasant to talk about coffins, but all moralizing, as all human life, must end in that.

The colonel had nearly reached home, Bobby

trotting by his side, when he overtook Mr. Silverquick taking his evening stroll. These two men, the colonel and the priest, were great friends, although it would have been hard to say what made them so; but each had a great respect for the other, as should be the case between two honourable men.

"What a large fish you've got there," said the clergyman, who knew about as much about fishing as—as my wife does. "Surely, you did not haul that out with rod and line." The pike's tail was hanging partly out of the bag, for no cunning would have got him in altogether.

"Didn't we!" said the colonel, "you'd better ask Bobby, here." So Bobby began his story, which lasted until he reached his paternal home.

"Bobby and the fish got rid of," said the clergyman, "if you'll let me, Whitethorpe, I'll come in and have ten minutes talk."

"With all my heart," said the colonel.

"I want to tell you a secret, and ask your advice," said Mr. Silverquick.

"Can't I advise you without knowing the secret?"

"No."

"And you never told it to anyone else?"

"Never."

"And you never will?"

"Certainly not."

"You will excuse my asking these questions, but you know the way of the world. People come and tell one a secret which they have just told in confidence to somebody else, and then one gets blamed. If a man offers to tell me a secret which he has told to anyone else, I always refuse to hear it, as I am sure to hear it in a day or two, at the mouth of common gossip."

"It's about a young lady." The colonel whistled and looked comical.

"My dear Silverquick, then," said he, "we're both men of the world, and honourable men, you had better tell me in a straightforward way, what your difficulty is, and then I will advise you as well as I can."

Then the parson told the story about Martha Hawkshaw, about his own scruples, and his defeat at the mother's hands, and how Martha was going to be a governess, in consequence, as he supposed, of that very transaction.

"I suppose you have not spoken to the young lady?"

"No, how could I in my position?"

"And you want my advice?"

"Yes! I did think of going to my friend —— at Oxford, but,—but—"

"But you knew what he would say?" laughed the colonel.

"Well not exactly that, but what do you think?"

"Why, I think that you ought to marry her, that is, if she will have you."

"What, in spite of the mother?"

"Tut! the mother will come round."

So the two friends shook hands and parted.

Mrs. Longfield and her daughters had no very romantic reason for leaving Maidford, the simple fact was that the lease of their house was up, and the landlord purposing to live there himself, there was not another house to be found which suited them.

Now Mrs. Longfield had many friends and connections at Tootham, a romantic suburb of London, which, as everybody knows, is situated south of the Thames, on the Clapping Road, within an hour's drive of the metropolis by 'bus. And to one of the delightful residences there, this family betook themselves. At the time of which I write, not so many years ago, Tootham was just beginning to take the name of a suburb; the city merchant, who had his cottage or villa there, was still able to remark, from the top of the omnibus, enough gaps in the line of houses, to help him to maintain the illusion that he lived in the country. There were fields there with buttercups and cowslips, and copses with real wild primroses, which anyone

might pick, that is, if somebody else had not been there beforehand.

Now, it is all different, there are railways and tramways, and huge hotels, and shops, and stations. The grass has almost left off growing, even on the causeways; and the meadows and copses are adorned, not with primroses and cowslips, but with bricks and tiles, and heaps of mortar.

The bricklayer smokes and works, where erewhile the cattle used to pasture, and the only sheep that one sees, are either being driven to the butcher's or suspended over his counter—dead as mutton. The common still exists, however, where schoolboys play, and outcasts lie down to die. There were a dozen cases of the kind last winter; truly this huge insatiable wicked London of ours affords a strange study for the philosopher.

The next best place to the bank of a stream for moralizing, is the top of an omnibus, and it is much to be wondered at, that considering the number of those vehicles, there are so few philosophers among us. The top of a mountain is a suggestive place enough, but a man who has brains will hardly risk them by climbing up; and after all what is there to be seen when one gets there, the tops of other mountains perhaps, the houses in the valley—with a good telescope we can make out the people waving their handkerchiefs, and very likely blowing their

noses afterwards unconscious of our espial. If we don't break our necks in the descent, we have plenty to talk about, and very little to think about. It is very well to talk about eternal snow and glaciers, and crevasses, but there are few ideas to be got out of such subjects, whereas from my favourite perch on the knifeboard, *to windward of the driver*, mark that, oh philosopher, student alike of morals and of manners, for the driver does not always carry a pocket-handkerchief.

I say from the top of the omnibus one has spread out the whole panorama of human life, wealth, rags, toys, business, sorrow, joy, crime, all humanity struggling on together, brothers all, yet how estranged. Yonder two policemen drag to justice a hungry criminal who has stolen a piece of bread, that well-dressed gentleman who regards the scene so complacently, has in his pocket a swindling prospectus. In due course his victims will starve, and steal, or die prematurely; why, good heavens, that man is actually carrying human lives and souls to market. Here comes another policeman, he touches his hat to the gentleman, he knows him, that is to say the gentleman's villa is on the officer's beat, the honest man keeps watch and ward for the rogue. All the grand old scripture stories, so true, so typical, come home to us here on the top of the 'bus.

Yonder is Aaron, standing complacently by the Golden Calf, while the people dance around it and hang garlands, and worship. Moses comes to rebuke them, and they are all off to eat, and drink, and play. There sits Job among the ashes and scrapes himself, but curses not God though his friends revile him. Lazarus is there, and Dives, and the good Samaritan, and the Pharisee, and the Publican, all these allegories you can fill up for yourselves at leisure. I fear that were I to do so, I should be obliged to make some very disagreeable applications.

But whither is the omnibus carrying us? Towards Tootham, and in this natural and agreeable manner is the reader conveyed into the regions of our story again, and set down, as it were, at the door-step of one of our principal characters. Shall we enter the dwelling? or had we not better enter into a little explanation?

I think it was chiefly at Bessy's instigation that the removal was made from Maidford to Tootham. There had been a good deal of house-hunting, and in every house examined Bessy had managed to find out or suggest some fatal fault. It is just as easy to find out faults as perfections in houses as in men and women—all depends upon disposition or temperament—for instance, the sparring cynic under pretence of being moral and truth-telling, finds out

nothing to discourse about except the failings of his fellow-creatures. It is all vanity, says he, and hypocrisy, and lies, there is nothing good under the sun. Looked at from the opposite stand-point, there is nothing so lovely as human nature. Vice is the exception, and hides its head out of sight; all motives are good and pure. To say otherwise is to utter treason against one's Creator, and so on. Now in this house-hunting Bessy was the cynic, her part was to start objections, and these objections, once started, were usually found valid. I think Bessy was hardly aware how deceitful her conduct was, she wanted to go away from Maidford, and knew very well that her mother had a strong hankering after Tootham. So it was, however, that not a suitable house could be found in all Maidford, the result we know.

Now the chances are that Bessy would probably have gradually been consoled under her troubles, by the influence of change of scene and society, only that the story about the colonel's nephew had somehow got abroad, and came to the ears of her sisters; indeed it soon became matter of common gossip in Maidford.

How do these secrets get told, I wonder? No one was present at the scene which I have described between the two lovers, at least no one as far as I am aware. People don't lurk behind

hedges and walls to listen to lovers' nonsense.

Then only one person had been told anything about it, and that person had promised not to tell, and I am sure that the colonel kept his word. Here then was an affair which ought to have been a secret between these people, actually talked of, and canvassed by several hundred. There are some mysteries in this world that are inscrutable, and this of gossip is one of them. Stories with some foundation of truth in them become common property, and no one knows who first told them, or on what authority.

However, all with which we have to do here is that the story was known, and came to the ears of Ellie and Georgie, and they began to torment Bessy about it. These young ladies are not favourites of mine; they acted often in a very cruel manner, in order to satisfy their own craving for amusement. I do not refer here to flirtations, but to their conduct "*en famille*." When they found that something was wrong with Bessy, and that she was no longer so lively as she used to be, they immediately set upon her, as wild birds and beasts will upon some helpless wounded creature of their own race. Bessy had grown more and more serious, and took her mother's part oftener in domestic squabbles, squabbles which usually began on the daughters' side.

As soon as the story of Augustus became known, hardly a day passed on which Bessy was not reminded of it in a disagreeable way; and the worst of it was that Bessy's persecutors evolved somebody else out of the story, and were always asking their sister why she had not taken Augustus, for she always stood up in his defence, and who the other one was, and suggesting names, until they arrived at a pretty correct surmise of the truth. They used to delight in 'bringing the subject round' to Gregory, and watching Bessy's confusion; until, I am sorry to say it, Bessy conceived a hearty hatred for her sisters.

Some people may think this very unnatural, or at least improper. But after all why should not a young lady fall in love with somebody who does not care two straws about her? I know of no canon to the contrary. I say, let Cupid play his pranks his own way, so long as decency be observed, and those who find anything indecent in this work must be very critical people. It is true I have a naughty word on the title-page, but the naughtiness is classical, like that naked Venus which you may have admired, madam, at the Louvre.

However, no need to anticipate criticism in this way.

In any case it so happened that the more Bessy

hated her sisters, the more she cherished her love for Gregory Hawkshaw. Was it not for his sake she was undergoing persecution?

She felt that she should carry her first love to the grave with her, as many an old maid has done before, and as many a young one has fancied that she will do.

"Do you still persist in your absurd desire of being a governess, Martha?" said Mrs. Hawkshaw to her daughter one day, "because I've heard of a very nice family."

"I think I shall change my mind, mamma."

"What an extraordinary girl you are, after giving me all the trouble of enquiring."

"Mamma, I'm not going to be a governess, because I'm going to be married."

CHAPTER XXXI.

FANCY, if you can, poor Mrs. Hawkshaw's state of mind. Her worst conjectures and suspicions had done nothing to prepare her for this. The depravity of the young people of the present day was something appalling. Here was her daughter announcing that she intended to marry an objectionable person, just as coolly as she might have talked about taking a country walk, or making a visit; and the worst of it was, that the mother knew that her daughter would have her own way. When she was a girl, young people never dared to have a will of their own; now it was the old people who had to give way, the old people, who were worn out, and useless, and despised. Some such thoughts as these flashed I dare say through Mrs. Hawkshaw's mind before she began the scene, which, of course, ensued—perhaps but one single thought embodying this, and a great deal more.

Shall I describe the scene? No, I am tired of always showing up the defects of good people;

and I hope that my readers know enough of Mrs. Hawkshaw's character to be able to picture to themselves what took place. Martha was firm, and the altercation ended in a good deal of crying and kissing, and reconciliation; and the next day the perpetual curate was allowed to call as the accepted lover of Martha Hawkshaw.

What did the priest care now about all the gossip and tittle-tattle that immediately sprung up in Maidford? Of course he was not going to stay there; he would go away, and begin a new career as a married man. The Misses Sanderson were quite disgusted—not shocked, indeed, for they had seen it all along. Had not that bold girl, Martha, been repeatedly noticed, angling, as it were, for the priest? They did not blame the poor man, except for being weak and foolish. Mrs. Tallbox, on the other hand, had again and again warned her daughter against that sheep in wolf's clothing, Mr. Silverquick; for her part, she was glad to hear that it was marriage, *and nothing worse*. "I think," said Mrs. Chatabout, "that people should practise what they preach." Ah! Mrs. C., suppose one of your own daughters had been the heroine of that story, what would your tune have been then, I wonder?

This is the way our dear friends talk about us, and I don't say that we are any better ourselves

in that matter. The other day I was pronouncing my opinion pretty freely about my friend Spiceall. —“I don’t like that fellow Spiceall, he’s got a hang-dog look about him, and I always know that he’s meditating what lie he shall tell next, besides his morals—” Enter Spiceall.

“Ah, how do you do; delighted to see you I’m sure. You are just the man I wanted to see.”

Now Spiceall has overheard the greater part of my remarks about him, how could he help it, when the door was wide open; but he cannot acknowledge that he has heard me, so he returns my salutation cordially, and enquires affectionately after the baby. When he goes away, he will begin telling his odious lies about me directly; very likely he will say that I beat my wife, and that the baby isn’t—Pshaw, fill up the sentence, somebody, such calumnies sicken me.

Gregory came home just in time to be present at his sister’s marriage. This took place—but there are some matters with which I refuse to meddle; anybody can walk into a church and see a marriage gratis. My friends who are story tellers—‘*nec coram populo!*’—let us do our marriages and executions off the stage. Indeed I think that public marriages in real life are quite as great a mistake as public executions: we have done away with the latter, (and shall probably do away with exe-

cutions altogether when we are a little wiser.)—(I beg the printer to be very particular about the brackets for this is a moral work.)—I say that the marriage ceremony, as performed publicly, is a very painful one to many of us. How many young ladies have vowed that they could never go through it? that they would rather die, etc., etc.? Does any one remain single rather than face that horror? The greater number of us make our first and last public appearance on our wedding-day—unless we marry twice—I should not mind the second time myself now, being used to it.

“I don’t like this part, it’s vulgar,” says my wife, interrupting. I read on—

I say why should my domestic concerns, and yours, reader, be made a public show of? We will suppose that we are nervous—why should our nervousness become the subject of public ridicule? There! no more of this pleasantry. I profess that I have the highest respect for all the ceremonies of the church, matrimony included. I can never pass a church door, while a marriage is going on. What sight so lovely as a timid, confiding, nervous bride? I declare I adore white muslin (is it muslin?) and orange flowers. What sight more inspiring and suggestive than a manly, ardent, handsome bridegroom? Heaven bless ye

young couple! for you are both young, of course. May you be fortunate, and never quarrel; may your home be full of sweet children, (A plague upon 'em, says Growler—noisy brats,)—I say, the author wishes you well, he is no sneerer at honest wedlock.

How did we drift into this discourse about marriages and executions? I have only just found out that I was talking about them: however, the word, execution, reminds me that I have here myself a stern duty to perform. I have to get rid of Mrs. Hawkshaw—good lady. Evolved from the depths of my moral consciousness, that is, from the bottom of my inkstand, she has fulfilled the object for which she was evolved, or wanted, and must die. Her death happened about six weeks after her daughter's marriage—she lived just long enough to be a mother-in-law. I married an orphan myself, and therefore have no experience in such matters; but I have read that a good mother-in-law is very different from a good mother. Again I say '*nec coram populo.*' Mrs Hawkshaw died, it matters not of what disease, and left a blessing for her children.

* * * * *

There are certain subjects, on approaching which, the humourist instinctively removes his

cap, and exposes his bald pate—the philosopher gets off his stilts, and the cynic rolls his tub into a corner, or kicks it out of the way.

Mother—the word has been so often repeated in tender accents by the old, in lisping love by the young, with intense reverence by all, that it has, softened by association—a halo of devotion encircling it. We write on such a subject with awe unspeakable, and with a deep sense of the feeble powers which can be brought to bear on such a theme. Even the Divine lips themselves found no grander metaphor than this, for giving men an insight into the love which God has for all his children. Think, my friends, what might have become of you individually, if your mothers had not believed in you and prayed for you? I don't mind confessing that that thought often occurs to myself. The mother believes in her own children, though all the world condemn them, rightly or wrongly. The hardest man of the world must know that, and if he only thinks of it, must soften a little. Riches, honour, renown, success, all these are worthless possessions, compared to a good mother. I have said on a former page, that a man can only be natural in the society of children—I was wrong, there is a place where a man can, if he will, be actually a child again—it is at his mother's

knees. There a man may pour out all his soul, confess the secret workings of his heart, the crime perchance, or remorse and shame, and there is always one who, in her own heart, absolves him.

What is priestly confession to this? A churchman, kindly or harsh, hearing twenty confessions a day, gives an unsympathetic absolution—"Go, my son, and sin no more." The man's lips speak, but while he makes the sign of the cross, he is preparing for the next penitent. But the mother's words come from the soul, and the confession goes straight to God with the prayer for pardon. Ah! those prayers, rising always when we are little aware of them, for you, for me, for all of us; surely they shall be heard, those saintly intercessions. And they do not end with the mother's life, believe that. A man who has been unfortunate enough to lose his mother, can always have her praying for him if he will. The mother's memory prays for us, even if we cannot believe, as why should we not, that her spirit intercedes for us in Heaven.

* * * * *

I dare say the reader has found out, long ago, that I have no more order in my composition than my friend Gregory had. I must go skipping about from subject to subject. I said just now,

that when people are wiser there will be no more executions. Here are Gregory's views on that subject, and they are my own too.

THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH.

A ludicrous title for a solemn subject. Punishment, Death, the ridiculous and the sublime. Is death a punishment at all? if so, by whom should it be inflicted? Is there any Christian Canon which makes man God's executioner? It is then to society that we must look for a defence of the custom of deliberately strangling or butchering a human being in the name of law and justice. We say to society, produce your arguments, get ready all you know of logic, and argue the point with us. In old times, you know, (not so very old), you used to hang a man for stealing a sheep, a duck, for ought we know, an egg, or an egg-cup, nay, for stealing that which could not be bartered for sixpenny worth of bread; what an alternative, starve or be strangled! Scores of people have been probably done to death, because God gave them an appetite, and man would not give them food. We are wiser now-a-days, such criminals are only sent to gaol.

Let us throw from us all superstitious sentiment. It is the murderer himself, and not the hangman, who is the executor of God's justice. The murderer is God's agent—good people and bad alike die

beneath his hands; such is the wonderful and mysterious will. But who appoints the hangman? Is Jack Ketch a special providence? where are the Divine credentials of Calcraft? If it is wrong for a murderer to kill a man, it is wrong for the hangman to kill him. Morally viewed the guilt of each is equal. But, says society, it is necessary for our protection that the murderer should be hanged. Is it? Who made murder the greatest of crimes? is it the commonest, the most deadly? Assuredly not.

The swindler, the forger, the perjurer, the liar, all do infinitely more harm to society than the murderer, we hang these no longer. Why hang the minor criminal?

But the murderer cuts short the life of his victim, and sends him to his account: so be it. We must leave him to God for that. Who are we that we take on ourselves to punish a man for such an offence?

Society has undoubtedly the right of punishing offences committed against itself; it has no right to put a man to death. Punishment should have two ends in view, the security of the community and the reformation of the criminal. Now doubtless by removing a murderer from the earth we satisfy one end; it is evident that that man will commit no more murders, but is he punished? Punishment implies something afterwards. We kill the man,

but the moral of the punishment is gone. The punishment of death can only be logically inflicted in a community which holds death to be the end of all things, which fears it as a consummation. To make death a punishment is to mock at immortality. In heathen times death *was* a punishment, because people were taught to regard it as such.

What a mockery it is! The gaol chaplain preaches immortality on Sunday, and on Monday tells some poor wretch on the scaffold that his death is a just *punishment* for his crime—*et apres?* But let us recur to the argument that murder is the one exceptional crime which deserves death, that is virtually what society says. Murder is an offence forsooth against the sacredness of human life. Huge blunder—human life is not sacred at all. Men die every day by force, by fraud, by accident; for charges false or fair, or for none at all, men suffer death. It is only thoughtless egotism which talks of the sacredness of human life. My life is perhaps sacred to me, and yours, reader, to you—and why? Because we want to enjoy it as long as possible, but to whom is an individual's life sacred except to himself.

Poetry and romance have assumed the position that "murder will out," and will in consequence be punished in kind, but stern facts point exactly to the other conclusion. In old mythologies, in which

the gods were continually mingling with the common affairs of men, sharing their pleasures, and committing their crimes, this idea of divine vengeance on the murderer was plausible enough. So also in Judaism, God's punishment of murder was an actual fact, though many distinguished murderers seem to have been exempt from punishment, but this was under an actual and palpable theocracy—*Our God is in Heaven*.

How many lucky ships have carried the murderer safe across the sea?—How many stout vessels, have gone down with innocent women and children.

But people will still say, "murder will out," it is the natural law, the murderer leaves traces of his guilt, stones cry out against him, his friends betray him, his own guilty fears betray him. My friends, this is all poetical nonsense, murder will not out more than any other crime. All crime "will out" if men have only wit enough to follow its traces; the detective policeman is a sad destroyer of romance. "Why will murder out?"—"because the gallows gapes for the murderer." But suppose the gallows to be taken away, the murder would still be found out all the same. Just think, and shudder as you think, how many undetected murderers must be walking about among us, dining at our tables, perhaps fondling our children.

The Gospel made murder a *moral* offence too; the

man who hates his brother is a murderer, do we hang that man? The man who really hates his brother, would kill him, if there were no policemen; if, in fact, he had no fear of being found out. It is not the fear of God's vengeance that keeps him back.

It is not worth while arguing here whether or no the fear of the gallows would deter that man. I think not, myself, but this matter has been discussed again and again.

Nor is it necessary to ask, what real punishment or restraint should be substituted for the gallows.

If such a thing were possible, the best substitute would be to condemn the man to death, and reprieve him on the scaffold.

My friends, who are worldly minded, did you ever consider what would be your own agony of soul if you knew for certain that at the end of three days you must die? Not by a shameful, or lingering, or painful death—you would not care one iota for such accessories, but that you must *Die* in seventy-two hours—that that is your fate inexorably.

Read Victor Hugo's "*Derniers Jours d'un Condamné*," in English, if you don't know enough French, and ponder over it for five minutes when you have read the last word. Do you think, in the case of a reprieve, that, the horror of those three days supposed, would not rest for ever on your

spirits, an appalling life-nightmare. Think of all this agony inflicted uselessly, for death comes mercifully to the condemned, to end it. In our army the custom used to be to flog a man first, and dismiss him afterwards. Oh! most illogical punishment—to flog a man for being a bad soldier, who is to be no more a soldier. Which was the act of vengeance, the flogging or the dismissal?

Let us all do our utmost, friends, to live well and suppress crime, to be civilized, and pure, and good; but let us, as soon as possible, abolish Jack Ketch—he is a hideous anachronism, an offence to Christianity—and decency—a standing instance of the stupidity of society, and the weakness of the law.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THERE has been attributed to the great Sir Walter Scott an unhappy aphorism which is always being flung at the heads of young authors by their friends and relations—"Literature is a good walking-stick, but a bad staff." It may have been so in Sir Walter's time, but just reflect that the great mass of literature now-a-days goes to light the fires every morning, and every morning there must be for each Briton in this isle something new to read. This great demand must create the supply, and the supply enables many hundreds of authors, good and bad, to live comfortably. And just think of the number of novels with which Mr. Mudie supplies us every week. Every man who has anything worth telling now-a-days, has a chance of being heard, and of getting paid the value of his work.

While Gregory was abroad, he occupied his spare time in writing a book, for which he received a considerable sum of money, and after

that he found no difficulty in getting literary employment. He was just established in his London lodgings, when he heard of his mother's death.

Soon after this, Maidford was deserted by the principal characters of this story, all except Colonel Whitethorpe. Mr. Silverquick and his wife went off to a pleasant country rectory in Dorsetshire, taking Mary Hawkshaw with them for the present, and Gregory went back to his work in London, (on looking back I see that he has not yet left it, but this is a slip that might happen to any author.)

There by dint of hard-writing, and steady application, he began to get known as an author, and earned a good deal of money. And what had become of his resolution to get married?

The truth must be told, Grégory began to get so occupied in his work, in his communings with publishers, and editors, and printers' devils, that he had not very much time to think about young ladies. He did, it is true, find time to go and see occasionally his old friends the Longfields, at Tootham; but somehow all his old shyness came back upon him, and I am of opinion that, when he rallied his wife, as has been related, on her having hunted him down and married him by force, he had some reason for doing so. I have no information to give on this point. It is an awkward thing, you

see, to ask a man "how did you get married?" I must confess that I was very much astonished when I heard of it, (you know of course what *it* means,) and I congratulated Gregory sincerely on having found such a nice partner.

So Gregory settled down soberly at last, as a literary man, and a domestic home-loving philosopher. He was the only man I ever knew that did not lose his temper with his mother-in-law: stay I remember, he did break out in private to me once. "I wish to God," said he, "I had married an orphan as you did." "Why, I thought you were a philosopher." "So I am," said he, "and I don't show it before the women, but there are some things that—but look here, I console myself with ink and paper. Just take this away and read it at your leisure." The paper which he presented to me was entitled

AN ESSAY ON MOTHERS-IN-LAW.

My son Gregory, who, I hope, will one day be a literary man, has as yet only an undeveloped taste, he is always upsetting the inkstand. An overturned inkpot is, I think, the most melancholy object that humanity can contemplate. Gregory furnishes me with plenty of such food for moralizing; a trumpery enough excuse for moralizing, you will say, but just think what power lies now-a-days in the inkpot! Look at it there lying on its side, or perchance com-

pletely turned over, draining as it were its life blood in sable streams over the table; watch the black cascade spouting down on the carpet, those very drops that might have portrayed noble ideas, that might have given to the world who knows what of originality, or wit, or folly, now serve only to make a great ugly black patch, one of many such. Hades is paved with good intentions, and my carpet is tessellated with wasted thoughts, with ideas thrown away. The pot itself is a miserable sight, empty, upside down, useless; as I look at it I think of the time when my inkpot will be upset for ever, as far as I am concerned, when the ink will have drained dry long ago, and the spots on the carpet will have turned into iron-mould, (this, says my wife's mother, will be their ultimate fate.) Well, so be it, inkstains or iron-moulds, it will not matter much to me then. At this point of my musings, enter the lady just alluded to; she happens to be staying in the house. "Gregory," says she, (why should she call me Gregory, I don't call her Jemima?) "Gregory, the hink upset again?" but if you please I will in my quality of reporter take the management of the aspirates. "It was your grandson, mum," said I. "I must say you manage that child very badly," says she. "My darling was only saying to me yesterday—" "I don't believe a word of it, mum," said I, pretending, miserable man, to be jocular.

"This is the second time this day, sir, that you've insulted me—I believe you want me out of the 'ouse, sir,—yes sir, I believe you wish I was dead, sir." "No, no," ejaculated I feebly, "not—not dead."—"I understand, sir, go hon insulting me, but thank 'eaven, I have a meek spirit, and can bear it all for the sake of my darling—we little knew what we should 'ave to put up with."

"For goodness gracious sake," said I, "woman, what have I done, that you should talk to me like this?"

"Woman, indeed, sir! perhaps you'd like to swear at me."

Indeed, I did feel somewhat as I used to feel in Australia, when driving an obstinate sheep.

The intelligent and experienced reader will, of course, understand that the upsetting of the inkstand had nothing to do with this little scene. Something or other had happened before, Heaven only knows what, for no man was ever clever enough to know why his mother-in-law scolded him.

And now, I arrive at the real subject, and I ask these questions:—Why should a man's mother-in-law come to see him? What is the good of mothers-in-law at all? How is it that women have no *mothers-in-law*. No one ever knew a woman that had one. Mothers-in-law are reserved

as a special torment for men. Cease, ladies, to clamour for your rights, or married men will be obliged, in self-defence, to ask their mothers to come and stay with them.

I should like to abolish mothers-in-law altogether, the relationship is clearly unscriptural. It is written that the mother-in-law shall be set *against* the daughter-in-law. Whereas I define a mother-in-law as a person who takes my wife's part against me. It is written that a man shall "leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife." The inference is clear, I am perfectly justified in shutting my doors against my wife's mother. The very next time she goes she shall never return—I swear it.

* * * * *

Alas! for my friend Gregory, how many men have made a similar assertion, I wonder?—and broken it under pressure.

With this trifling exception then, Gregory Hawkshaw had very tranquil and pleasant times of it. I think no man enjoys life so much as a literary man who is fond of his work, and allows himself to follow his own convictions, especially if he has a good wife, and a comfortable home, and Gregory had both these. His wife turned out to be a very good manager, and *never tried to put her husband's study tidy.*

How is this? The scene fades from me. There is no Gregory at all; he never existed, perhaps. I begin to think so—none of these people that have been talking, and walking, and thinking so long—none of these ever existed, they are myths—shadows. The person whom I regret most of all is the colonel, kind friend to children and all young people. They are gone—Bessy, children, mother-in-law, all. So I lay down my pen.

“Stay,” cries my wife, there is no moral. I think your hero is not a very creditable one.”

“How so, Maria?”

“Why he has done all sorts of disreputable things, and is besides over head and ears in debt. Are these the sort of men that deserve to live happy ever after?”

“I have no doubt, Maria, that *as soon as he had money enough*, Gregory became honest, and paid his debts, every farthing; as to the disreputable things that you say he did, they did little harm except to himself. None of us deserve perhaps to be happy, happiness comes to us whether we have earned it or not. It is after it has come that we must try to deserve it, if we wish to keep it.

Reader, may you be happy.

FINIS.

